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ABSTRACT

This document presents different strategies and approaches for members of school communities to consider when creating safer learning environments. It contains the distilled collective experience and wisdom of over 500 people. Guidance for school violence prevention and response is offered in the following areas: ways to prevent student violence, threat assessment, planning and training for what to do during an actual crisis, how to respond during a crisis, how to handle the aftermath of a crisis, legal considerations, recommendations for the media, and legislative issues. Roles of school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, law enforcement, and community are discussed. These topics are addressed in eight sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Prevention, (3) Threat Assessment, (4) Crisis Planning and Preparation, (5) During a Major Crisis, (6) After a Crisis, (7) Legal Considerations, (8) Recommendations for the Media, (9) Legislative Issues, (10) Web Links with Additional Information, (11) Acknowledgements, and (12) Other Private Sector Liaison Committee Publications. This document can be used to help communities audit their schools' existing policies, procedures, and plans; serve as a basis for strengthening collaborative school violence policies, procedures, and plans; help public safety and other crisis response agencies assess their school safety plans; and provide guidance to members of the school community. (RT)

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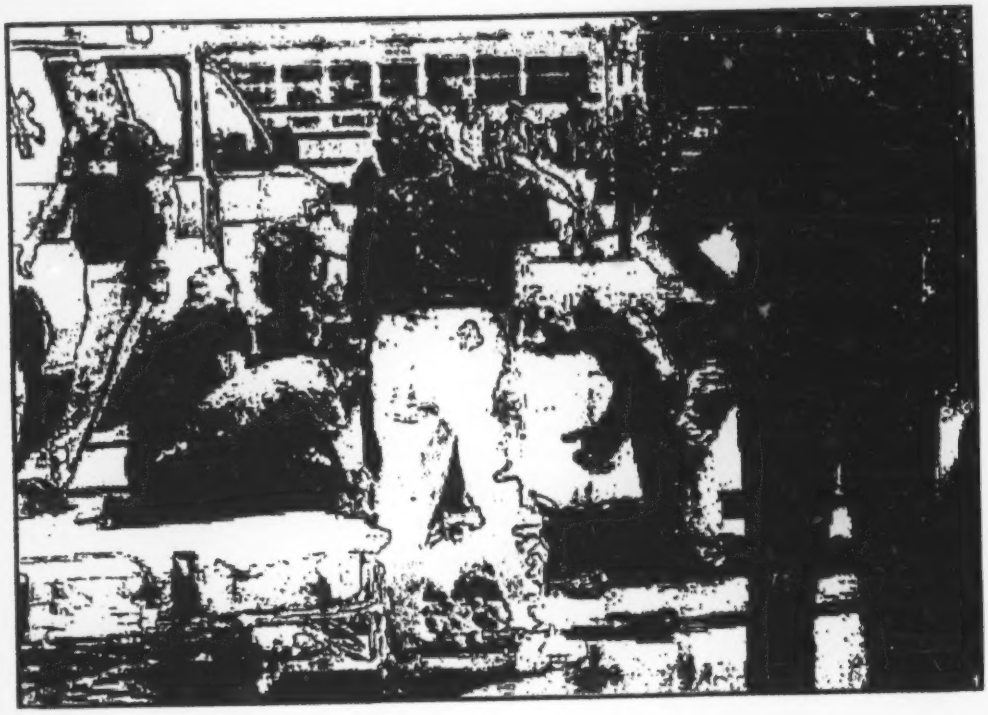
Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence



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This report is provided as a service of the IACP's Private Sector Liaison Committee. We encourage readers to disseminate this report as widely as possible. We have placed the IACP address and logo at the bottom so that agencies who reprint the document for wider distribution will have room to place their agency name and address at the top of this page.

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GUIDE FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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This document has not been copyrighted. Complete or partial reproduction is encouraged as long as it: 1) is not done for profit, 2) does not alter the tone or substance of the recommendations, and 3) advances the goal of reducing the hazards of violence in the schools in a manner compatible with the needs of students, teachers, school administrators, parents, school staff, emergency service providers, and law enforcement.

Resolution Supporting the Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence

PSLC027.T99

WHEREAS, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is meeting at its 106th Annual Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina between October 30 and November 3, 1999; and

WHEREAS, the IACP Private Sector Liaison Committee has collaborated with the Department of Defense (DoD) Security Research Center (SRC) to produce the *Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence*; and

WHEREAS, the DoD is responsible for the education of dependents of service personnel in schools located around the world, a situation that makes this joint effort appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the guide has been prepared in a similar manner to an earlier joint effort between the PSLC and SRC entitled *Combating Workplace Violence: Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement*; and

WHEREAS, the publication of the *Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence* is being made possible by a grant from the Department of Justice through its Bureau of Justice Assistance; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the National Sheriffs' Association, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U. S. Secret Service, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Security Research Center, and Staff of the IACP have reviewed and edited the input from 15 focus groups held across America involving hundreds of school administrators, teachers, students, school board members, parents, experts on school violence, counselors, medical personnel, and local public safety officials;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the IACP recommends the use of this guide by local communities as a tool for constructing appropriate preventative and response measures within their individual jurisdictions,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the IACP goes on record commending all those hundreds of professionals and citizens who gave their time and expertise in support of the construction and distribution of the guide.

ADOPTED by the membership at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Business Meeting, November 3rd 1999.

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Section 1. Introduction

A. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to present different strategies and approaches for members of school communities to consider when creating safer learning environments. No two schools are exactly alike, so it is impossible to establish one plan that will work well in all schools. Violence prevention programs work best when they incorporate multiple strategies and address the full range of possible acts of violence within schools. In order for any set of policies to work, it must be established and implemented with the full participation and support of school board members, administrators, parents, students, community members, emergency response personnel, and law enforcement. Without such shared responsibility, the chance of safe school policies being successfully implemented and accepted is undermined.

All involved in working to prevent or respond to school violence should be aware that no strategies in this nor any other publication provide any guarantees against violence erupting. Recognition of the rarity of school shootings and the complexity and unpredictability of human behavior should temper community initiatives as well as expectations. Most of the interventions presented in this document, however, have the potential to yield benefits beyond just reducing hazards associated with school shootings. Additional benefits include:

- Lowering rates of delinquency, harassment, bullying, suicide, and all other forms of violence and antisocial behavior.
- Increasing the likelihood troubled youth will be identified and receive treatment.
- Improving the learning environment by reducing intimidating, disruptive, and disrespectful behavior.
- Preparing communities for responding to not only shootings at schools, but also all other man-made and natural disasters.

B. Background

School violence has increasingly come into the public eye due to deadly multiple shootings in such places as Littleton, Colorado; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Springfield, Oregon. The possibility of school shootings has become an issue for urban, rural, and suburban communities alike. Since 1992, 22 schools have experienced multiple victim homicides, many in communities where people previously believed "it couldn't happen here."

Given the number of students and schools in the United States, multiple victim homicides are still extremely rare, and in recent years, the overall rate of violence in schools has actually declined. Physical conflicts, threats, and harassment are, however, still common. Many students and teachers are more fearful than ever before when they enter the doors of their school. This climate of fear makes it more difficult for schools to provide positive learning environments.

The causes of school violence are subject to much speculation. While the causes clearly lie in multiple areas, possible contributors to school violence mentioned in the literature include:

- Exposure to violence within the family and community.
- Child abuse and neglect.
- Poor parenting practices and lack of interest in children's activities.
- Peer pressure to engage in harassment of other students, violent behavior, drug or alcohol use, and truancy.
- Prejudices based on race, religion, ethnicity, physical appearance, social class, sexual orientation, disability, gender, etc.
- Information on how to make explosive devices and unsupervised access to firearms.
- Excessive exposure to violence in television programming, movies, and video games.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- Lack of conflict resolution skills.
- Lack of quality role models and the availability of inappropriate role models.
- Perceived lack of opportunity to be successful through legitimate means.
- Failure to detect and treat children exhibiting warning signs of being troubled.
- Lack of adult supervision of, and positive interaction with, children after-school.
- Negative student self-image.

C. Approach

The guidance appearing in this document reflects the collective experience and wisdom of over 500 people. A first draft of recommendations was compiled by collecting and categorizing relevant recommendations found in the literature on school violence, juvenile delinquency, and workplace violence. The draft was then sent to experts on these topics for their review and suggested revisions. The recommendations were also reviewed and revised by focus groups attended by a diverse range of school community members, including board members, teachers, administrators, students, parents, counselors, probation officers, city and state officials, attorneys, and police and other emergency response personnel. Sessions were held in Monterey, CA; Tucson, AZ; East Lansing, MI; Chicago, IL; Seattle, WA; Littleton, CO; Jonesboro, AR; Milwaukee, WI; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Baltimore, MD; Glastonbury, CT; New York, NY; Plano, TX; and Philadelphia, PA. The resulting draft was reviewed and revised by representatives of the National Sheriff's Association, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Secret Service, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Defense's Security Research Center, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and International Association of Chiefs of Police.

The names of the experts and focus group participants who donated their time, expertise and perspective to this project are listed in the acknowledgments. As a result of

their contributions, guidance for school violence prevention and response is offered in each of the following areas:

- Ways to prevent student violence.
- Threat assessment.
- Planning and training for what to do during an actual crisis.
- How to respond during a crisis.
- How to handle the aftermath of a crisis.
- Legal considerations.
- Recommendations for the media.
- Legislative issues.

The roles of school administrators, teachers, and staff are discussed. In addition, student, parent, law enforcement, and community roles are addressed. Throughout the report, textboxes provide more in-depth information or illustrate the potential value of the suggestions using actual cases of school violence.

D. How to Use this Document

The table of contents provides a way to identify the sections of greatest interest. The entire document should be reviewed, however, to gain an understanding of the different roles and elements needed to achieve an integrated approach for addressing the problem of violence in schools. Among the ways the document can be used are:

- **To help communities audit their schools' existing policies, procedures, and plans**. Not every suggestion contained in this document is appropriate for every school. All schools and communities could benefit, though, from checking to see that they have considered and, where appropriate, implemented the recommendations likely to enhance their schools' safety.
- **To serve as a basis for strengthening collaborative school violence policies, procedures, and plans**. School safety planning committees can delete, revise, and add to recommendations in this document as needed to address their unique needs and circumstances.
- **To help public safety and other crisis response agencies assess their school safety plans**.
- **To provide guidance to members of the school community**. This document has not been copyrighted. Sections of the document can be extracted (with or without being modified) and provided to constituents. For example, a list of things parents should do to help prevent school violence could be provided via handouts, newsletters, etc. A list of actions the media can take to help prevent school violence could be sent to local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. The need for retyping the relevant sections can be eliminated by downloading them from the IACP web site at http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/specialreports/pslc.index.html.

Section 2. Prevention

A. The Role of School Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

To be effective, violence prevention programs require community-wide collaborative efforts that include students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, social and mental health professionals, law enforcement, emergency response personnel, security professionals, school board members, parents, the business community, etc. School administrators should bring together all of the above constituencies to develop strategies appropriate for their own particular school and community environments.

While school boards and administrators set the climate of safety within schools, teachers, especially, must be directly involved and supported in all stages of developing and implementing programs to achieve safer schools. Teachers establish the first line of school safety, because they have the most direct contact with students. Often, they also have great insight into the potential problems and realistic solutions applicable to their school.

1. School Security

The level of physical security may need to be modified in order to lower schools' vulnerability to violent behaviors. Different strategies will be required to address needs specific to individual elementary, middle, and high schools.

Administrators should initiate a comprehensive security assessment survey of their school's physical design, safety policies, and emergency procedures. The assessment should be conducted in cooperation with law enforcement, school security staff, physical facilities personnel, fire and other emergency service personnel, teachers, staff, students, and other school community members. Using the conclusions of that survey, administrators should assign a safety and violence prevention committee composed of all of the above representatives to develop a comprehensive security plan (School Site Safety Plan). Based on each school's needs, school safety plans may include some or all of the following suggestions:

a. Utilize School Resource Officers, who may be provided by local law enforcement. SROs often provide law enforcement, law-related counseling, and law-related education to students, faculty, and staff. Continuity of officers within individual schools should be encouraged, so that students and SROs develop rapport.

b. Consider seeking one or more probation officers for use on campus to help supervise and counsel students. This would be especially appropriate for high schools with a significant caseload of juveniles on probation. For more information, see the textbox on page 5.

c. Utilize paid, trained personnel hired specifically to assist teachers and administrators in monitoring student behavior and activities. Continuity of monitors within schools should be encouraged to facilitate good rapport with students. The number of monitors used should be based on the number of students, the extent of problems at the school, and the space and layout of school grounds.

Probation: Win-Win

The Probation Department of Monterey County, CA established a win-win partnership with local high schools in its jurisdiction. The Probation Department and high schools each pay half the salary and benefit costs for probation officers assigned full-time to schools having significant caseloads of juveniles on probation. The schools benefit by having full-time probation officers on their premises who offer the following:

- Know which students are on probation.
- Know the conditions of their probation (e.g., drug testing or search waivers, not wearing gang colors or associating with gang members, etc.).
- Know their criminal and family history.
- Can arrest students on the spot who violate the terms of their probation agreement.
- Can conduct initial probation screens on students who engage in criminal conduct and can place them under the Probation Department's diversion program supervision and restrictions.

The Probation Department benefits by reducing its officers' caseloads and having daily contact with juveniles on probation. All parties benefit from working collaboratively on cases, having a more thorough understanding of students who misbehave, and having a wider range of interventions available to them.

d. Encourage screened and trained parents/guardians and other volunteers to provide monitoring of students. Ensure volunteers have adequate training and guidelines outlining their duties.

e. Develop and enforce restrictions about student loitering in parking lots, hallways, bathrooms, and other areas. Publish restrictions in the student handbook/code of conduct.

f. Consider the use of metal detectors only in special circumstances to deter weapons on campus.

g. Adopt policies for conducting searches for weapons and drugs. Publish policies in the student handbook/code of conduct.

h. Require visitors to sign in and sign out at the school office and to wear visible visitors' passes. Post prominent signs at all school entrances instructing visitors where to sign in and out. Publish the policy in the student handbook/code of conduct.

i. Encourage school personnel to greet strangers on campus and direct them to sign in if they have not. Also instruct school personnel and students to report visitors who have not signed in.

j. Require students and staff to carry with them and/or wear their school photo IDs during school and at all school-related activities.

k. Establish a closed campus policy that prohibits students from leaving campus during lunch.

l. Establish a cooperative relationship with law enforcement

and owners of adjacent properties to the school that allow for joint monitoring of student conduct during school hours. Encourage neighboring residents and businesses to report all criminal activity and unusual incidents. Establish a protocol within the school to handle calls from the neighborhood.

m. Consider providing and making use of alarm, intercom, cell phone, building paging, two-way radio, and mounted and hand-held camera monitoring systems on buses and school campuses.

n. Develop a school bus rider attendance checklist for each bus and use it daily.

o. Consider the need for employing outside security personnel during school functions.

p. Patrol school grounds, especially in areas where students tend to congregate such as parking lots, hallways, stairs, bathrooms, cafeterias, and schoolyards.

q. Develop threat and crisis management plans and provisions as outlined in Sections 3 and 4.

r. Develop a comprehensive set of violence prevention strategies based on the guidance provided in this document and ensure that it is fully implemented.

2. Reporting

Establish a climate that encourages and enables students, teachers, and parents/guardians to report threats and acts of violence. For an example of a case involving violence that may have been averted with more adequate reporting and assessment, see Case 1, page 7.

a. Within the limits of legal guidelines and statutes, maintain confidentiality.

b. Develop and adequately communicate reporting procedures with input from district school officials and local public safety agencies. Standard procedures should include definitions of pertinent information and how and where information should be distributed.

c. Consider establishing a properly staffed, confidential hotline for reporting issues of harassment, safety, vandalism etc. If answering machines are used, calls need to be retrieved in time to effectively address threats of violence. Aggressively advertise the hotline number to students and parents /guardians in student handbooks, on posters throughout the school, on pencils, student IDs, lockers, etc. Parents and students should also be advised when to use 9-1-1 rather than the hotline.

d. Obtain training to recognize whether reports of threats or acts of violence are false and/or malicious.

3. Student Rules

Student rules must be communicated, understood, and consistently enforced. They also must comply with constitutionally guaranteed due process procedures.

a. Establish rules of conduct pertaining to improper student behavior using input from students, parents/guardians, staff, public safety officials, mental health agencies, and legal counsel.

Case 1

Failure to Recognize and Respond to Warning Signs

One winter day, a fourteen-year old boy hid in a tree and, seeking revenge for unrequited love, shot two students outside his small, 388-person high school. Three months later, in a nearby town of 46,000, possibly inspired by the fourteen-year old boy's publicity, another thirteen-year old boy bragged to many of his schoolmates that he would kill all of the girls who he believed had spurned him. He had long shown signs that he was obsessed with weapons and tried hard to emulate the style of members of the Bloods, a notorious urban gang. He often talked of being mad at everybody, and at one point was heard to say, "I've got a lot of killing to do." One afternoon, he pulled a knife on a student in the locker room.

The very next day, the thirteen-year old and his 11-year old friend loaded a van full of guns and ammunition and drove to their junior high school. They parked in a wooded area adjacent to the school's playground. One boy set off the fire alarm, then rejoined his friend to await the evacuation of the school. As students emerged onto the playground, the two boys opened fire, killing four girls and a female teacher. Of the eleven wounded students, only one was a boy.

Due to the prior absence of this level of violence in that community and in most schools, nobody could have imagined the thirteen-year old boy would carry out his violent fantasies. With this and other school homicides, the nation must now come to terms with the need to take seriously warning signs and to develop effective strategies to encourage reporting of both threats and acts of violence.

b. Annually review, and if needed, revise rules of student conduct.

c. Ensure that all rules have a purpose that is clearly understood. They should be clear and communicated to all students in both written and verbal formats. Students' comprehension of the rules should be assessed.

d. Post summaries of rules of student conduct in classrooms and throughout the school.

e. Send rules home to be read by students and parents/guardians. Include an acknowledgement form for students and parents/guardians to sign and return to the school. Hold meetings to communicate rules to parents/guardians, and to the extent practicable, make sure they understand them. Invite parents/guardians to call if they have questions about the rules.

f. Communicate rules in as many languages as needed and possible for each school's population.

g. Apply rules in a consistent manner. Have pre-established consequences for rule violations.

h. Develop a consistent, timely, and effective means to notify parents/guardians of rule violations and consequences.

i. Establish clearly defined rules and appropriate consequences for all types of harassment, intimidation, and disrespect. Rules should cover adult and student behavior at all school events. Parents/Guardians and teachers need to act as positive role models for students.

j. Suspend and recommend expulsion of students and dismiss or discipline of staff for serious rule violations. Serious rule violations include:

   1) Possession of a firearm on school property or at school events. The 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act mandates a one-year expulsion for students who bring a firearm to school. The chief administrating officer of the local education agency is able to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. All local education agencies that receive funding from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) must require all students found carrying a firearm to be referred to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

   2) Possession or use of a weapon on school grounds or at school events that is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm.

   3) Physical assault of a teacher, administrator, staff member, or student.

k. Suspend and consider the appropriateness of expulsion for the following:

   1) Verbal threat to a teacher, administrator, staff member, or student.

   2) Possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs on campus.

   3) Actual or threatened retaliation against persons who report threats or acts of violence.

4. Support for Teachers and Other Staff

Working in collaboration with faculty, the school administration has the responsibility to enforce school rules.

a. Take quick, consistent, and appropriate actions toward students who are reported by teachers and other staff for rule violations.

b. Provide times and locations for teachers to meet and discuss ways to maintain classrooms that are conducive to learning. Group teachers and other personnel who work with the same troubled student into teams to enable them to discuss that student and strategies for dealing with him/her.

5. Programs for Suspended/ Expelled Students

For students who have been suspended or expelled, the school should:

a. Provide an alternative educational program in a separate environment. Appropriate programs should be available for elementary, middle, and high school grade levels.

b. Provide a low student-to-staff ratio.

c. Consider requiring their participation in community-based programs where they would learn while helping others. Possibilities include working with neighborhood beautification efforts or with victims of violence where they would directly witness the effects of causing injury to others.

d. Consider reducing length of suspensions in exchange for successful completion of community service.

e. Consider providing extra counseling in areas such as anger management, conflict management and resolution, respecting the rights of others, and social skills. Use behavior modification or other applications of rewards and punishments to reduce delinquency.

f. Consider providing parents/guardians with counseling or training in

parenting skills oriented toward reducing problematic behavior by students in school and at home.

g. Recognize the risk involved in putting troubled students together. Take appropriate security measures in light of that risk.

h. Provide students of the appropriate age with career counseling and information about employment opportunities.

6. Student Court

For non-criminal offenses, consider use of peer courts.

a. Consider having qualified adults oversee peer courts.

b. Provide adequate training to peer court participants.

c. Inform "defendants" they must abide by the student court's decision and inform them of consequences for not complying.

7. Positive Incentives

Instead of focusing only on punishment of negative behaviors, find ways to encourage positive behaviors.

a. Create recognition rewards for students who perform good citizenship behaviors.

b. Invite community leaders to discuss different ways students can achieve success.

c. Consider the potential value of school-wide assemblies in which effective motivational speakers address such topics as anti-drug, alcohol, and violence messages.

d. Invite responsible adults to mentor and serve as positive role models for students.

e. Promote press coverage of all types of students who have done well.

f. Create programs that promote positive values, incorporate building blocks for developing character, and recognize students who exhibit positive traits.

g. Promote partnerships between schools and law enforcement, community businesses, and service organizations to recognize and reward positive student behavior.

8. Employee Screening

Teachers, staff, and volunteers can have a profound effect on children's development. Investigations should be conducted to avoid selecting potentially harmful or abusive teachers, staff, and volunteers. Some states have legislation about screening people who work with children.

Use one or more of the following means in a manner consistent with applicable law to screen potential teachers, staff, and other non-students who are regularly on-site:

- State sex offender registry check.
- Criminal background check.
- Fingerprint check.
- Employment, personal, and education reference checks.
- Personal interviews.
- On-the-job observation.
- Students' evaluations of teacher performance.
- Professional disciplinary board background check.
- Alcohol/drug testing.
- Psychological testing.
- Mental illness/psychiatric history check.

9. Class and School Size

a. Work toward creating and maintaining optimal student-to-teacher ratios. This allows teachers to better identify warning signs demonstrated by students who may be prone to violence.

b. Organize community-wide efforts to determine the most appropriate size of schools in each district. Schools where students are more connected to their school environment (e.g., people, facility, operations, and activities) tend to have lower rates of violence.

10. Parent Outreach

a. Encourage faculty to solicit as much parental involvement as possible. Among the ways this can be achieved are school/class newsletters, classroom activities, web sites, personalized phone calls, local newspapers, voice mail direct to teachers, and opportunities for participation in school clubs, organizations, and other extra curricular activities.

b. Seek and promote innovative ways to increase the extent to which students and parents/guardians connect with their school, faculty, and staff. Examples include having parent advisory meetings, using parents/guardians as mentors and/or guest speakers, providing parents/guardians attending school functions with childcare for their children, establishing a parent lounge, and offering parenting classes.

11. Utilization of the School

a. Serve as an advocate for Head Start and other on-site quality preschool programs for younger children.

b. Promote free and attractive after-school activities for all students. Examples include sporting activities, assistance with schoolwork, and social events. Try to have at least one activity that would be of interest to every type of student. The After-Schools Enrichment Grant Program can be used to help provide funding for such activities. (More information on after-school programs is provided in the textbox on page 11. Addresses of web sites with information about funding are provided in Section 10.)

c. Seek and promote partnerships with external programs to provide supervised after-school on-site activities. Programs selected should contribute to students' safety and to their physical, moral, academic, emotional, or social development (e.g., 4H, Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, community youth sports programs, etc.).

12. School Physical Environment

A safe and secure physical environment promotes and enhances the learning process.

a. Maintain the appearance of schools to decrease vandalism and violence.

b. Employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to reduce problems. These measures utilize internal and external facility designs to increase the likelihood that acts of misconduct on school premises will either be physically discouraged or observed and acted upon. CPTED can also yield designs that facilitate more effective emergency response to critical incidents.

c. Establish and enforce a dress code policy for students, faculty, and staff

After-School Programs

An Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Report to Congress issued July, 1999 reported that juvenile violence frequently occurs in the context of unsupervised groups of adolescents. The report also noted that youth who are in a supervised setting after every school day tend to be less delinquent than those with fewer after-school hours supervised by adults. Among the possible reasons for their lower delinquency rate are:

- It is more difficult to avoid being caught and punished for engaging in bad behaviors while under close adult supervision.
- Participants have additional exposure to positive adult and student role models.
- After participating in their programs, they have reduced time and energy to get in trouble.
- During program hours participants are more likely to associate with and develop friendships with children who are less likely to promote or accept negative behaviors.
- Program participation may increase self-esteem or perceptions of having a positive future, which would give them less to gain, and more to lose, from engaging in negative behaviors.

Despite these potential benefits, after-school programs do not always result in localized decreases in juvenile violence rates. Among the possible reasons are:

- Not everyone participates. Children who need supervision the most may be the least likely to participate. If this is the case, after-school programs could widen the gap between those less likely and those more likely to engage in negative behaviors.
- Some of the participants' delinquent friends and acquaintances, who do not participate, may pressure those who do to engage in negative behaviors in order to demonstrate and reinforce the participants' social bonds to them.

To increase the effectiveness of these programs in preventing youth violence, consider:

- Offering as many positive after-school options as possible, so they attract the broadest range of students.
- Eliminating roadblocks to student participation by taking steps like offering the programs free, providing scholarships, scheduling activities at times and locations convenient for parents/guardians and students, and providing transportation.
- Helping to increase the consistency and longevity of each positive after-school activity. Working parents/guardians need to be able to depend upon consistent drop-off and pick-up times and locations. The success of programs is also often dependent on after-school activities obtaining a good reputation among students and on the same students signing-up for those activities year-after-year. Continuity also provides participants with an opportunity to improve their proficiency in those activities over a longer period of time.
- Ensuring each after-school activity supports academic advancement. This can be accomplished by making certain participants have sufficient time to study; providing student or program staff tutors; and encouraging participants to study, not drop out of school, and do as well as possible in their classes. After-school activities may be one of the few positive school-related experiences that some students have each day and may be their primary reason for not dropping-out. These programs need to be designed to complement academic achievement, not compete with it.
- Ensuring each after-school activity contributes to participants' social and moral development. This can be accomplished by stressing concepts such as good sportsmanship, being a team player, helping others, sharing, and cooperation.

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with input from all constituents. Consideration also should be given to requiring school uniforms. Dress codes can simplify recognition of intruders, improve discipline, decrease violence and other forms of misconduct, and minimize the impact of gangs and other fringe groups on school property. For an example of an incident where a school uniform policy may have prevented a violent act, see Case 2.

13. Counseling Services

Schools should provide or refer students to counseling services, including emotional (e.g., grief, anger management, depression), social development, exceptional student (e.g., gifted and learning, speech and/or physically disabled), academic, vocational, pre-natal/reproductive, gang, psychological, family, and substance abuse. Each area requires different knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Schools should ensure students in need have access to counselors qualified to treat their respective problems. Counseling services should be of adequate duration and provide continuity of treatment. When student needs exceed the counseling resources of the school, recommendations for community assistance should be provided. Cooperative arrangements may be possible with neighboring school districts or with other city, county, or state organizations that provide or utilize these types of services.

a. Provide counseling services in a manner consistent with national professional standards (e.g., National Association of School Psychologists, American Counseling Association, National Association of School Social Workers) regarding appropriate treatment and student-to-counselor ratios.

Case 2

Knife-Wielding Teenager Visits A School

In an urban, working class city of 62,000, a young teenage boy carrying a knife entered one of 40 mostly unlocked and unmonitored entrances at a high school of over 2000 kids. He was not a student at the school. He searched through the building for another boy with whom he had argued at a dance the previous weekend. He found him in a second floor hallway and stabbed him, injuring him severely. The victim's best friend was stabbed to death as he tried to help his friend. The school had never before experienced this type of violence.

Students at the school complained that school officials did not adequately monitor visitors to the campus. Teachers equipped with walkie-talkies did patrol halls as a matter of policy, and police officers were stationed outside the building before and after school. While it cannot be known whether a school uniform requirement could have prevented this tragedy, it might have helped the teachers, police and hall monitors spot the intruder before he found his intended victim.

b. Establish training programs under the supervision of a trained counselor where students can be taught to help other students. Match students with peers who can relate to the student receiving advice and to his/her problems.

c. Ensure counselors have adequate information about and access to community resources.

d. Ensure students are informed of the different types of counseling services available and know how they can obtain them.

e. Identify at-risk students and provide counseling.

14. Conflict Resolution Programs

Conflict resolution and management programs teach people to find peaceful solutions to conflict. These programs use negotiation, mediation, and consensus decision-making to find solutions that are positive for all parties. They attempt to create win-win situations. For examples of some different types of programs, refer to the adjacent textbox.

a. Conduct a needs assessment to determine the types of conflicts that tend to occur and how they are best resolved.

b. Select which conflict resolution program(s) would be most appropriate for the school.

c. Find trainers to implement the program.

d. Commence training at the earliest age-appropriate school level. Continue the training throughout students' education.

e. Obtain support and involvement from faculty and parents/guardians.

f. Teach conflict resolution to students using activities incorporated into the curricula and by having teachers and staff model appropriate behaviors.

g. Evaluate the success of the program against pre-established goals.

15. Social Skills Training

Social skills training enables students to have positive and respectful interactions with other students, parents, faculty, and staff. Positive relationships can reduce tendencies toward violent behavior.

a. Encourage faculty to instruct and model positive social skills.

b. Implement life skills training throughout the curriculum to teach students how to recognize problem situations, manage stress, achieve self-control, and demonstrate emotional maturity.

Examples of Conflict Resolution and Management Approaches

The **process curriculum** approach devotes a specific time to teaching problem-solving skills in a separate course or curriculum.

The **mediation program** approach trains people in conflict resolution to provide third party mediation to others trying to resolve a dispute. Peer mediation has been found to work well for many but not all problems. For example, peer mediation counseling should not be used for responding to serious or persistent delinquency problems. Peer mediation also must be made available when it is needed, not just when it is convenient for peer counselors and staff.

The **peaceable classroom** approach brings conflict resolution into core subject areas and uses the techniques to help manage the classroom.

The **peaceable schools** approach builds on the former approaches by using conflict resolution as a tool for helping to manage the entire school.

16. Cognitive Skills Training

Encourage faculty and staff to challenge the way students think about problem solving. Violence in school settings often erupts as impulsive or irrational reactions to immediate problems.

a. Teach means-ends thinking, in which students learn how to reach a goal by step-by-step planning, identifying potential obstacles, and accepting that problem solving often takes time.

b. Teach analytical thinking, in which students learn how to weigh the appropriate pros and cons when deciding whether to carry out an act.

c. Teach alternative solution thinking, in which students learn to find new solutions to a problem.

d. Teach consequential thinking, in which students learn to consider different outcomes that might result from a given action.

17. Diversity Issues

Intolerance often leads to conflict, interferes with the learning process, and has been a factor in violence in the schools. The purpose of diversity training is to try to reduce intolerance.

a. Design and distribute a diversity acceptance policy to students, parents/guardians, teachers, and staff. Include a description of forbidden behaviors, responsibilities of students and staff, consequences of engaging in prohibited behaviors, and locations of pertinent school and community resources.

b. Provide diversity acceptance training to all staff and faculty.

c. Give all students diversity acceptance training in the classroom and in assemblies, incorporating small group discussions to augment awareness and sensitivity. Consider activities that celebrate the school's cultural diversity. Make sure that all activities are appropriate for the particular age and cultural groups with and for whom they are being implemented.

d. Use progressive discipline for acts of intolerance. Use non-disciplinary actions, (e.g., counseling, parent conferences, community service, or awareness training) for minor first-time infractions. Progressively increase discipline (e.g., detention, suspension, or expulsion) for recurring or more serious violations.

e. Recognize that certain types of graffiti, literature, and actions may be indicators of hate-crime or harassment. Collect, store, and monitor data on these types of occurrences and share this information with police. Consider photographing graffiti.

18. Anti-Bullying Programs

Bullying is a range of behaviors, both verbal and physical, that intimidate others and often lead to antisocial and unlawful acts. Staff, students, and parents/guardians need to understand that bullying is a pervasive problem that leads to violence. Bullying should neither be thought of as a "kids will be kids" occurrence nor accepted as a way of life. (Case 3, page 15, describes an incident believed to be associated with prolonged bullying.) Implement anti-bullying programs that include the following school-wide, classroom, and individual tactics:

Case 3

Bullying and Harassment

Two teenage boys arrived late to school one day carrying a semi-automatic rifle, a pistol, pipe bombs, two pistol-grip shotguns, and at least 100 rounds of ammunition. By the end of the day, 14 students and one teacher were dead. Over 30 more were injured. Among the dead were the two gunmen with self-inflicted gun shots to the head.

The boys were affiliated with a fringe anti-social group that formed its identify, at least in part, against the backdrop of a school culture they perceived as valuing athletic prowess and popularity over intellect. Their group had a long running feud with athletes and other popular students in the school. Students described ongoing harassment and bullying between the outcasts and jocks in the school. Jocks regularly harassed the outcasts who would respond, in turn, with Nazi slogans and threats of violence. One time prior to the shooting, one of the outcasts flashed a shotgun at the jocks in a local public park, which heightened tensions between the groups. At one point in the massacre, the two gunmen may have sought out athletes as targets.

While hardly justifying the actions of the two killers, bullying and rejection clearly played at least some role in leading up to this incident. Bullying and other forms of harassment should not be tolerated in schools. They are abusive acts that harm students and detract from the quality of the school's learning environment.

a. Clearly define what constitutes bullying activity with input and involvement from the school community (students, staff, parents, teachers, volunteers, and law enforcement). Communicate that definition to students, teachers, parents, and staff. The definition should include physical, verbal, and psychological aspects of bullying.

b. Based upon the above, establish specific rules prohibiting, and consequences for, bullying activity as part of a comprehensive school code of conduct.

c. Seek information about the motivations behind specific incidents of bullying.

d. Establish a reporting mechanism by which incidents of bullying can be reported and recorded immediately after they occur.

e. Ensure reporting procedures address with whom and under which circumstances information will and will not be shared. Care should be taken to:

- Protect witnesses and victims from retaliation.
- Meet applicable standards for confidentiality.
- Ensure that personnel involved with victims and bullies have the information they need to effectively work with them.
- Protect the accused from false allegations.

f. Notify parents/guardians of both victims and perpetrators whenever a report of bullying is formally filed. Establish a policy regarding the circumstances under which parents/guardians of bullies and/or their victims should be called in for an on-site conference.

g. Continually monitor the number of reported incidents of bullying.

h. Regularly conduct a survey assessing the prevalence, location, and kind of bullying activities that are occurring. Include students, parents, teachers, and staff. Also address bullying activities that occur on the way to and from school. Work with community policing efforts to help make students' journeys to and from school safe and free from acts of intimidation. For surveys requiring student input, follow administration guidelines regarding the possible need for parental approval.

i. Consider holding focus groups on an on-going basis to discuss the nature of the problem of bullying and ways to solve it.

j. Identify community resources that can be utilized to intervene immediately, as well as those that can be used to develop additional intervention and/or prevention programs. Ensure adequate social service and mental health resources are both available and being utilized.

k. Take actions to identify bullies and victims and to promote intervention at the classroom level and at other student contact points within schools. Develop a program that provides victims with immediate support services and referrals, as well as teaches avoidance techniques and coping skills. Refer offenders to available support services.

l. Advise teachers and staff to record events, as well as the interventions and strategies they implement to address different instances of bullying.

19. Programs to Reduce Isolation and Alienation and to Promote Respect

School administrators and teachers should identify and implement programs that increase positive self-respect and respect for others. In general, these programs should:

a. Establish standards for how people should treat each other.

b. Promote and ensure that classroom standards are consistent with school and district policies.

c. Ensure classroom standards are reviewed in class and that a copy of them is sent to the parents/guardians.

d. Coordinate a cooperative effort to create and disseminate statements of values that all affiliates of the school will be expected to follow. All members should be able to state their school's values. For examples of school values statements, see the textbox on page 17.

e. Establish better lines of communication with students who may feel alienated or isolated and/or have low self-esteem.

f. Increase the number and diversity of positive extra-curricular activities available to students.

g. Help students become more successful in achieving desirable short- and long-term goals and increase the likelihood that their progress is recognized and rewarded.

h. Teach students how to resist others' efforts to intimidate or isolate them.

i. Initiate a community service requirement for middle and high school graduation.

Sample Values Statements

Statements of values should be broad in reach, but short in length. If properly used in both award and disciplinary settings they can take on real meaning as a cornerstone of student, teacher, and staff commitment to the school and the larger community. Knowledge of school values can be reinforced by listing them on posters throughout the school, on ID holders, on stickers, and on other promotional items. The following is the statement of values for Green Run Elementary School in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

We believe:

- All children can learn if given the opportunity to do so.
- Children will consistently strive to meet high expectations.
- The school should provide a safe and positive environment in which each student can achieve success.
- Students learn best when they have the support and encouragement of parents, community, teachers, and peers.
- Each student should share a common body of knowledge which enables them to act in an ethical manner (responsible, functional, independent member of society).
- The school should strive to meet the individual student's learning style.
- The school should be able to adapt to the changing community.

The statement of values below is from West Decatur Elementary School, Decatur, AL.

At West Decatur, we believe:

- Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Every individual is entitled to a quality education in a safe, nurturing, and orderly environment.
- Every individual needs to believe in the worth of themselves and others.
- Every individual needs to accept consequences for chosen behavior.

j. Model and reinforce values such as learning, respect, character, and cooperation.

k. Encourage students to work together through the use of cooperative learning techniques such as team projects.

l. Encourage the contemplation of core values (respect, responsibility, trust, sharing, etc.) through the use of age- and curriculum-appropriate writing assignments and class discussions.

m. Encourage students to become actively involved in the school community.

n. Recognize and reward students who exhibit positive and responsible behavior.

o. Offer troubled and withdrawn students, including victims, help outside of class with schoolwork and personal problems.

p. Develop a climate that encourages open communication between students and adults. It should maxi-

mize the options by which students can transmit their concerns about violence to school personnel, foster an environment of trust, and be sensitive to their fears of retaliation.

20. Drug and Alcohol Education

The use of drugs and/or alcohol is often associated with violence and other forms of delinquent behavior.

a. Educate students about the dangers and illegality of drug and alcohol use.

b. Identify and implement age-appropriate programs that include discussions about how students can resist negative peer pressure. Use role-playing and other types of activities to supplement discussions.

c. Educate parents/guardians and enlist their support in addressing the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Parents/Guardians and teachers need to realize that their own behaviors in these areas influence children.

d. Avoid programs that are based predominately on fear arousal, moral appeal, or the simple distribution of information.

e. Establish a contract requiring students who participate in extracurricular activities to agree not to use alcohol or drugs.

f. Identify community resources to which parents/guardians and students with alcohol or substance abuse problems can be referred for information and/or intervention.

21. Anti-Gang Programs

Gang membership is destructive to a healthy school environment. Members of gangs are more likely than other students to carry weapons and engage in acts of violence.

a. Establish partnerships with law enforcement in order to exchange information and educate teachers and staff about the presence of gangs and their activities.

b. Establish and fund gang resistance and violence prevention teams to implement community, family, and youth education programs and to provide alternative activities in which children can participate. Teams should include educators, law enforcement, probation officers, community leaders, students, school resource officers, gang specialists, mental health professionals, and parents.

c. Become aware of gang-related clothing, paraphernalia, and behavior. Establish a school dress code that would exclude outward manifestations of gang membership.

d. Inform parents/guardians if their children are suspected of involvement in gangs and give them relevant information, counseling, and access to available pertinent resources.

22. Suicide Prevention

Suicide is a far more common form of violence involving students than school homicide. In some cases, perpetrators of school shootings felt their actions would lead to their being killed by police, which also could be considered a form of suicide. It is hoped that effective suicide prevention will decrease the occurrence of both self-inflicted suicide and violence by students who believe their acts will result in their being killed by others.

a. Develop a plan that specifies how to identify students at risk, how to

handle threats, and what actions to take in the event of a suicide.

b. Ensure that students have, and are aware of, easy ways to get help, such as access to suicide hotlines, counselors, and written/visual materials.

c. Educate students, parents/guardians, teachers, and other school personnel on how to identify and get help for troubled students before they become victims of suicide. Include how to get immediate help to prevent or respond to suicide attempts.

23. Training and Technical Assistance for Teachers and Staff

Because teachers and staff establish the first line of school safety, they should be supported in creating safe classroom atmospheres. Schools should provide training and technical assistance to teachers and staff in the following areas:

a. Conflict resolution and management.

b. Hostility and anger management.

c. Victim sensitivity and support.

d. Crisis/critical incident management.

e. Bullying and harassment recognition, prevention, and intervention.

f. Who should, how to, and where to refer students and families to social service agencies.

g. Classroom management.

h. How to identify and defuse potentially violent situations.

i. How teachers' and other staff members' own behavior may diffuse or escalate conflict.

j. How to identify troubled students. Examples of "Warning Signs" are provided in the textbox on page 20. A case illustrating how failure to identify and act upon warning signs may have contributed to a school shooting is presented in Case 1, page 7.

k. How to communicate and work with parents/guardians in order to intervene in the behavior of troubled students.

l. How to most effectively work with classes that have ethnic and economic diversity.

24. Evaluation

Routinely monitor and evaluate the steps taken to improve school safety.

a. Conduct surveys of the school community to determine perceptions of safety, areas for improvement, and the effectiveness of school safety programs.

b. Compile statistics on data obtained from school records, available police information, and other pertinent resources. Maintain statistics on discipline cases, suspensions, expulsions, students found with weapons, and incidents of verbal or physical harassment.

c. Organize a committee of students, teachers, staff, emergency response personnel, law enforcement, and parents/guardians to periodically review and analyze the collected information and to suggest new or modified violence prevention strategies.

Identifying Warning Signs of Potential Violence

Learn to identify characteristics of persons who exhibit warning signs of potential violence. Those who display these signs should be referred to appropriate agencies or individuals such as counselors, parents, law enforcement, and social, medical, and mental health services. When deciding whether and where to make referrals, one should consider applicable regulations concerning parental consent, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting requirements.

These signs simply mean that a child appears to be troubled, and violence might be one of the possible outcomes of this distress. Neither stigmatize children nor assume that they will be violent just because they are at risk for such behavior. Other warning signs may also exist. Consequently, this list should not be considered all-inclusive, and certain items and combinations may be far more indicative of a potential problem than others. The signs include:

- Has engaged in violent behavior in the past.
- Has tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts abnormal for someone that age.
- Continues exhibiting antisocial behaviors that began at an early age.
- Forms and/or maintains friendships with others who have repeatedly engaged in problem behaviors.
- Often engages in name calling, cursing, or abusive language.
- Has brought a weapon or has threatened to bring a weapon to school.
- Consistently makes violent threats when angry.
- Has a substance abuse problem.
- Is frequently truant or has been suspended from school on multiple occasions.
- Seems preoccupied with weapons or violence, especially that associated more with killing humans than with target practice or hunting.
- Has few or no close friends despite having lived in the area for some time.
- Has a sudden decrease in academic performance and/or interest in school activities.
- Is abusive to animals.
- Has too little parental supervision given the student's age and level of maturity.
- Has been a victim of abuse or been neglected by parents/guardians.
- Has repeatedly witnessed domestic abuse or other forms of violence.
- Has experienced trauma or loss in their home or community.
- Pays no attention to the feelings or rights of others.
- Intimidates others.
- Has been a victim of intimidation by others.
- Dwells on perceived slights, rejection, or mistreatment by others; blames others for his/her problems and appears vengeful.
- Seems to be preoccupied with TV shows, movies, video games, reading materials, or music that express violence.
- Reflects excessive anger in writing projects.
- Is involved in a gang or antisocial group.
- Seems depressed/withdrawn or has exhibited severe mood or behavioral swings, which appear greater in magnitude, duration, or frequency than those typically experienced by students that age.
- Expresses sadistic, violent, prejudicial, or intolerant attitudes.
- Has threatened or actually attempted suicide or acts of unfashionable self-mutilation.

B. The Role of Students

The majority of students recognize they share in the responsibility to prevent school violence. Not only do they suffer the consequences when it occurs, they provide an essential perspective on how to promote school safety. Therefore, students should be included in all efforts to create safer schools. The following are steps students can take to help reduce violence in their schools.

1. Know and follow their school's violence prevention policies.
2. Work with teachers and administrators to create a safe way to report threats.
3. Learn about who they can go to with information and concerns about known or potential violence or harassment.
4. Listen to friends who share upsetting thoughts or display troubling, harmful, or dangerous behavior, and encourage them to seek help from a parent, teacher, school counselor, or other trusted adult.
5. Confide in a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult if they persistently: 1) feel so "down", sad, or "empty" that they don't want to go out and do things; 2) are not able to sleep; 3) have difficulty concentrating; 4) feel helpless and/or angry; or 5) feel like they are losing control over their thoughts or emotions.
6. Immediately report suspicious behavior and threats of violence and/or suicide to school officials or another responsible adult. Students who do not feel comfortable speaking directly to school officials or adults should use another means such as anonymous hotlines or notes.
7. Help organize and participate in after-school activities with responsible members of the community. Encourage peers to do the same.
8. Participate in on-going activities that promote school safety. Actively participate in programs such as conflict resolution, problem solving teams, mentoring programs, student courts, community service, and peer mediation.
9. Act as positive role models for peers and younger students. Accept responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact their actions have on others.
10. Refrain from belittling, harassing and bullying other students. Be tolerant of other students and their differences.
11. Learn techniques to avoid and cope with negative peer pressure.
12. Speak out and refuse to join in when members of groups or cliques with whom they are involved engage in negative behaviors toward others, such as acts of harassment or vandalism.

C. The Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are an essential part of school violence prevention. Demonstrating an interest in their own children's lives is one of the most important steps parents /guardians can take to help prevent youth violence. Open communication between children and parents is critical.

Parents/Guardians' help should be requested for the design and implementation of safety plans. Information and training sessions should be provided on school safety policies and programs. In addition, parents/guardians should be informed of other steps they can take to contribute to a safe school environment.

1. Topics to Discuss with Children

a. The school's discipline policy. Parents/Guardians should know the policy, communicate their support for it, discuss the reasons behind it, and expect their children to comply.

b. Their school's safety and security procedures. Parents/Guardians should know the procedures, make certain their children know them, and communicate why they expect their children to follow them.

c. Their own positive household rules, family values and traditions, behavior expectations, and the reasons behind them.

d. Violence in television shows, video games, movies, and books. Talk about impact of violence in the media and its real life consequences.

e. How to solve problems peacefully.

f. The value of individual differences.

g. Their children's concerns about friends and other people who may be exhibiting threatening or violent behavior. Parents/Guardians should share this information with the friends' parents/guardians and/or other appropriate authorities in a way that protects the confidentiality of their own children as needed and possible.

h. Personal safety issues and appropriate responses to them.

i. Their children's day-to-day activities, accomplishments, concerns, and problems.

2. Actions Parents/Guardians Can Take with Children

a. Model appropriate behaviors. Demonstrate healthy ways to express anger and relieve stress. Do not show anger in verbally or physically abusive ways.

b. Watch their children carefully for any troubling behaviors. Parents/ Guardians should learn the warning signs for at-risk children and how to get help from school or community professionals. (For a list of warning signs, refer to the textbox on page 20.)

c. Take an active role in their children's education. Visit and volunteer at their school, monitor their schoolwork, and get to know their teachers.

d. If asked, participate in school safety planning sessions.

e. Initiate or participate in violence prevention groups in their community, such as Communities that Care, Mothers Against Violence in America, etc.

f. Get to know their children's friends and families. Establish a network to exchange information with other parents.

g. Monitor and supervise their children's reading material, television, video games, and music for inappropriately violent content.

h. Monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet. For more information, see the textbox below.

Ways Parents/Guardians Can Supervise Children's Use of the Internet

- Consider placing computers in locations where parents/guardians can observe what their children are seeing.
- Establish family rules for internet use and inform children that their use of it will be monitored.
- Use filtering/blocking software to restrict their children's access to inappropriate sites and material.
- Search their home computer files to see what sites their children have visited.
- Look for signs that their children may be involved with online criminal activity or be interacting with potentially dangerous people.
- If training is needed, attend classes.
- If training classes are not available, ask school administrators, law enforcement, or their local Parent Teachers Association to consider offering them.

i. Talk to employers about having special considerations for parents/guardians who want to participate in school activities.

j. If needed, attend anger management, parenting skill, and/or conflict resolution classes offered by the school or other organizations.

k. Establish and consistently enforce household rules and reward positive behavior.

l. Provide quality childcare for their children.

m. Promote a healthy and safe lifestyle by prohibiting the illegal or irresponsible use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their home.

n. If needed, seek out support groups to improve parenting skills and/or to manage anger and frustration.

o. Provide a quality after-school environment for their children. (See the textbox on after-school programs on page 11.)

p. Monitor and supervise their children's whereabouts (where they are, how they can be reached, and how to reach their children's friends' parents). Encourage and facilitate their association with friends who seem to reinforce good behavior. Make their home a place where children and their well-behaved friends are welcome, comfortable, adequately supervised, and safe.

3. Firearms and Ammunition

a. Keep firearms and ammunition locked up and in separate locations. Secure the keys in a location unknown to children. Many children who bring firearms to school obtain them from their own households.

b. Monitor children's environments for indications of weapons and destructive devices.

c. Teach children about the dangers of firearms.

d. Be aware of and concerned about easily accessible firearms or ammunition at the homes of friends, relatives, and neighbors.

D. The Role of the Community

In order for any safe schools program to be effective, it is necessary to obtain the active participation of the community in planning and implementation. School officials should make an effort to recruit individual members of the community, local businesses, community service organizations, attorneys, clergy, mental health and child welfare personnel, local officials, family agency staff, and recreational organizations. The following are additional specific suggestions for members of the community.

1. Individual Community Member Actions

a. Volunteer for mentoring programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.

b. Take the initiative to help create, run, and/or volunteer for an after-school recreation program.

c. If qualified, consider volunteering to provide care for troubled youth and their families.

d. Provide community-based services that care for children in need and their families.

2. Businesses and Community Organization Actions

a. Adopt and support a local school.

b. Hire high school students as part-time employees.

c. Actively seek out student volunteers and interns.

d. Allow employees who are students enough time off to study. Provide extra time off during final exams.

e. Be considerate of employees who want to attend their children's school activities.

f. Give basic job skills training to students.

g. Develop a scholarship program.

h. Offer support to schools by providing needed services, facilities, equipment, etc.

i. Work with school administrators to create positive community service learning experiences for young people.

j. Work with school administrators to provide career information.

E. The Role of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement should work with schools to formulate district-wide and school-specific violence prevention programs and crisis response plans.

1. Police Training

a. Address the conditions that contribute to school violence.

b. Include in-service training that addresses factors influencing school violence, conflict resolution, school violence scenarios, and response guidelines.

c. Train officers how to handle interactions with school administrators, teachers, and students.

d. Train selected officers how to conduct school security assessments.

e. Train selected officers on school-related threat assessment and responses.

2. Police Activities

a. Patrol school grounds and develop a school resource officer (SRO) program. SROs can deter violence and other forms of misconduct by being a visible presence at the school and by helping the school develop and implement violence prevention programs.

b. Develop and maintain working partnerships with area schools.

c. Work with schools, parents/guardians, and truants to lower truancy. Bring students found outside of school either back to school or to a truancy center. Visit the homes of these children to help determine whether their parents/guardians have been neglectful or abusive.

d. Consult with school administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians about school security.

e. In concert with school and/or police department legal counsel, provide guidance to school personnel on how to spot concealed weapons and what steps they should and should not take when they suspect students are carrying them.

f. Provide schools, students, and parents/guardians with information about police department resources.

g. Provide schools with guidelines and examples of when to contact the police.

h. Assist school officials with the screening of employees and staff-like volunteers including checking criminal history files and sex offender registries.

i. Serve on school threat and disciplinary action assessment teams, along with teachers, administrators, and counselors.

j. Try to maintain a constructive relationship with students, parents, and school employees. This allows law enforcement officials to be seen as problem solvers and positive role models, rather than just enforcers. A constructive relationship can help foster respect for authority. Ways to establish such a relationship include:

- Bicycle registration drives.
- Sponsored recreational activities.
- Explorer or cadet programs.
- Parent, student, and teacher in-service training programs.

k. Initiate and participate in programs for juvenile offenders using interventions that are appropriate for their risk factors and violation(s).

l. When appropriate, make follow-up visits to the homes of juvenile offenders. Consider also the appropriateness of conducting consent or search warrant based searches in cases involving students who made threats or brought weapons to school.

m. Develop task forces aimed at enforcing laws among minors.

n. Develop a plan for cracking down on illegal gun sales and work to educate parents/guardians on firearm safety, including the proper storage of weapons in the home.

o. Enforce existing truancy laws.

p. Use other federal, state, and local criminal justice agencies and law enforcement departments as resources to help determine the best possible safe school strategies for the community.

Section 3. Threat Assessment

It is important to prepare a threat assessment strategy so that when a threat occurs, everyone will know there is a policy and understand what actions to take. Threats are alarming statements or behaviors that give rise to concern about subsequent violence. Among the possible components of threat assessment strategies are:

1. Establish a Threat Assessment Team that would be called in to assess the credibility of, and needed response for, serious threats. The team should include school and school district administrators, legal counsel, and representatives from law enforcement. It might also include security personnel, mental health professionals, threat assessment experts, and any other person who could contribute in a meaningful way. Normally, the permanent members of the Threat Assessment Team would also serve on the School Site Safety and Violence Prevention Committee, Crisis Planning Team, and/or Crisis Management Team.
2. Define the nature and scope of threats that should and should not invoke the involvement of the Threat Assessment Team. The range of threats may include bomb threats, threats against children by parents/guardians in custody battles, personal vendettas between students or gangs, threats against teachers or staff involved in domestic conflict, threats of retaliation, efforts to intimidate, and any other type of alarming behavior that involves members of the school community or its property.
3. Establish a policy to assure that reports of threats submitted from both inside and outside the school are routed to the appropriate administrator and investigated.
4. Establish procedures for recording and monitoring threats. Guidelines pertaining to what information should be included in threat incident reports are presented in the textbox on page 27.
5. Ensure cooperation between law enforcement and school authorities in collecting and preserving evidence of threats.
6. Evaluate situations when a threat has been made and if warranted, notify the potential victims. Some threat assessment suggestions developed by the U. S. Secret Service appear in the textbox on page 28.
7. Consider the costs and benefits of providing increased protection to threatened persons. Possible actions include transferring potential victims to another school or providing them with additional means to signal distress, such as cell phones or emergency transmitters.
8. Determine what additional security measures, if any, should be put in place after a threat. Changes might include requesting additional police patrols, hiring security guards, locking doors (in compliance with fire regulations), adding video monitors, or taking other appropriate precautions.
9. Counsel potential victims about the various civil and criminal options available to them, such as obtaining a restraining order. The potential reactions of the offender

should be considered in whether or not to seek a restraining order. Additional security precautions should be taken if the offender is likely to respond negatively to the intervention chosen, especially during the period immediately following the initial application of that intervention.

10. Learn what procedures should be taken to screen mail and packages left on school sites after a threat has been made. Contact the U.S. Postal Service, local police, or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for guidance.

11. Establish policies for releasing any threat-related information to either the school community or media, giving consideration to the potential consequences of choosing to, or not to, disseminate information pertaining to serious threats.

Threat Incident Report

School and school district policy should require students and employees to report all threats or incidents of violent behavior they observe or are informed about to the Designated Administration Representative (DAR). The DAR should take the steps necessary to complete a threat incident report as quickly as possible, including private interviews of the victim(s) and witness(es). The report will be used by the Threat Assessment Team to assess the safety of the school and to decide upon a plan of action. It should include:

- Name of the threat-maker and his/her relationship to the school and to the recipient.
- Name(s) of the victims or potential victims.
- When and where the incident occurred.
- What happened immediately prior to the incident.
- The specific language of the threat.
- Physical conduct that would substantiate intent to follow through on the threat.
- How the threat-maker appeared (physically and emotionally).
- Names of others who were directly involved and any actions they took.
- How the incident ended.
- Names of witnesses.
- What happened to the threat-maker after the incident.
- What happened to the other students or employees directly involved after the incident.
- Names of any administrators, teachers, or staff and how they responded.
- What event(s) triggered the incident.
- Any history leading up to the incident.
- The steps that have been taken to ensure the threat will not be carried out.
- Suggestions for preventing school violence in the future.

Elements of the threat incident report and any subsequent actions relating to the incident should be recorded in a tracking system for use by the DAR and the Threat Assessment Team. Such systems range from simple card files to commercially available relational databases. The tracking system, as well as all investigative files, should be kept secure and maintained separately from other records.

Secret Service Threat Assessment Suggestions

School and law enforcement officials are frequently placed in the difficult position of having to assess specific people (e.g., students, staff, teachers, and others) who may be likely to engage in targeted violence in which there is a known or knowable target or potential assailant. The following suggestions for threat assessment investigations are based on guidelines developed by the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). They were developed primarily for preventing the assassination of public officials so they may not be applicable to all school situations.

To identify threats, school officials are advised to:

- Focus on individuals' thinking and behavior as indicators of their progress on a pathway to violent actions. Avoid "profiling" or basing assumptions on socio-psychological characteristics. In reality, accurate "profiles" for those likely to commit acts of targeted violence do not exist. School shootings are infrequent and the great majority of individuals who happen to match a particular profile do not commit violent acts. In addition, many individuals who commit violent acts do not match pre-established profiles.
- Focus on individuals who pose a threat, not only on those who explicitly communicate a threat. Many individuals who make direct threats do not pose an actual risk, while many people who ultimately commit acts of targeted violence never communicate threats to their targets. Prior to making an attack, potential aggressors may provide evidence they have engaged in thinking, planning, and logistical preparations. They may communicate their intentions to family, friends, or colleagues, or write about their plans in a diary or journal. They may have engaged in "attack-related" behaviors: deciding on a victim or set of victims, determining a time and approach to attack, and/or selecting a means of attack. They may have collected information about their intended target(s) and the setting of the attack, as well as information about similar attacks that have previously occurred.

Once individuals who may pose a threat have been identified, ten key questions should guide the assessment of the threat:

- What motivated the individual to make the statement or take the action that caused him/her to come to attention?
- What has the individual communicated to anyone concerning his/her intentions?
- Has the individual shown an interest in targeted violence, perpetrators of targeted violence, weapons, extremist groups, or murder?
- Has the individual engaged in attack-related behavior, including any menacing, harassing, and/or stalking-type behavior?
- Does the individual have a history of mental illness involving command hallucinations, delusional ideas, feelings of persecution, etc., with indications that the individual has acted on those beliefs?
- How organized is the individual? Is he/she capable of developing and carrying out a plan?
- Has the individual experienced a recent loss and/or loss of status, and has this led to feelings of desperation and despair?
- Corroboration: What is the individual saying, and is it consistent with his/her actions?
- Is there concern among those that know the individual that he/she might take action based on inappropriate ideas?
- What factors in the individual's life and/or environment might increase/decrease the likelihood of the individual attempting to attack a target?

Source: Robert Fein & Bryan Vossekuil, National Threat Assessment Center, U.S. Secret Service

Section 4. Crisis Planning and Preparation

Responses for different types of crises should be planned in advance and reviewed, updated, and practiced periodically. The chaos and panic created by these situations cannot be effectively handled without a pre-established specific plan of action.

Teachers and staff play critical roles in implementing planned responses both before and after emergency response personnel arrive. Therefore, their participation in and understanding of the planning is essential.

A. The Role of School Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

1. Planning

a. Establish a Crisis Planning Team that includes representation from faculty and staff, as well as safety, security, and emergency response providers who are knowledgeable about crisis planning and/or would help intervene in a school safety crisis. The primary duty of these teams is to develop and periodically refine crisis management plans.

b. Establish School Crisis Management Teams at district and site levels utilizing the nationally recognized Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS provides a comprehensive organizational structure, role assignment, and decision-making process to prepare for and respond to all types of crises. Schools should contact emergency management agencies (e.g., fire departments) for information about ICS. ICS-related information is also available on web sites identified in Section 10.

c. Have a working knowledge of all available and needed resources for handling and responding to a crisis situation. During planning, utilize school personnel to determine resources available within the building and the district. Utilize emergency response personnel from the community to help determine availability of resources within the community.

d. Include off-site school activities such as stadium events, field trips, etc. in crisis planning.

e. Assign all faculty and staff to clearly defined roles under the ICS system. Critical assignments must be staffed three deep to assure coverage at all times.

f. Identify and make pre-incident arrangements with the counselors who would provide the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing immediately following a crisis. See the textbox on page 30.

g. Identify and train on-site building maintenance staff (primary and backup) and off-site personnel who will take responsibility for dealing with fire alarms, sprinkler systems, gas, etc. These personnel should immediately be available at the command post.

h. Identify personnel who will have master keys, codes, and access to secured areas at the site.

i. Establish and publicize the chain of command so that if the appointed crisis director as specific in the ICS is unavailable, the next designated

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Following a serious act of violence in the schools, employees, counselors, students, police and other emergency responders, witnesses, and the families of each often suffer from stress-related ailments such as insomnia, depression, anger, headaches and ulcers. These conditions translate into higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, as well as lower school and job performance. Much of this suffering and loss can be reduced if the affected individuals receive debriefings from experienced counselors 24 to 72 hours after the traumatic incident.

The purpose of such a debriefing is to provide students, school employees, and others affected by the event with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about what happened and how it was handled. It also gives the debriefing team a chance to educate employees about the symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and to identify individuals who might need further counseling.

Depending on their developmental level, children have different coping skills for dealing with traumatic events and memories of them. Counseling interventions for younger children often require involvement and use of nonverbal material and/or very directive ways to elicit and reflect feelings. Frequently, facts and fantasy are intermingled, and young children have a difficult time acknowledging a crisis. With adolescents, however, a discussion format can be used as a possible means to activate and enhance their problem-solving and crisis-coping skills.

Crisis Management Team member will take charge.

j. Establish and practice how to protect students with physical or developmental disabilities.

k. Prepare a dismissal plan in the event students need to be sent home early. Establish procedures for notifying parents/guardians and media. Make arrangements for transportation of special needs students.

l. Establish and practice lockdown and evacuation procedures, including where students should go during different types of crises. Consider various/adverse weather conditions and ways to transport evacuees. In the event of evacuation, predetermine specific locations of safe havens for students to gather a safe distance away from the school. Publicize locations to students, parents, school teachers and staff, crisis team members, and emergency response personnel.

m. Develop an emergency traffic plan capable of protecting emergency response routes and accommodating the likely traffic and parking needs of parents/guardians and media.

n. Pre-designate places, depending on the nature of the crisis, for personnel to perform their roles. Places include:

- A designated media contact location.
- A designated place for parents/guardians to congregate.
- A designated place for clergy.
- Staging areas for transportation, etc.

o. Establish a "Calling Tree" or "Phone Tree" which allows the Crisis Management Team to be notified immediately. Post Calling Tree lists in strategic locations, such as superintendents', principals', assistant principals', nursing, counseling,

custodians', crisis team representatives', and school department offices; as well as at local police department, school district, and other designated off-site locations.

p. Make alternative response plans known to key personnel who would communicate the nature of the crisis and the appropriate level of response. Information about some aspects of response plans may need to be restricted as a security measure.

q. Create crisis and evacuation kits and place them at strategic locations inside and outside of schools. For a list of items to include in crisis kits and types of places to locate them, refer to the textbox on page 32.

r. Consider utilizing digital technology and computer databases to store photographs and demographic information that would enable easy and accurate identification of students, teachers, and staff. Always have hardcopy versions in the event computers are inaccessible.

s. Provide copies of all emergency and evacuation plans to local law enforcement, fire, and other emergency response agencies.

t. Provide law enforcement, fire, and other emergency response personnel with blueprints, layouts and floor plans of school buildings and grounds, including information about main leads for water, gas, electricity, cable, telephone, HVAC, alarm and sprinkler systems, and locations of hazardous materials, elevators, and entrances. These should be reviewed annually and include both officials' and students' names for each location on the property. Schedule walkthroughs by emergency responders, including city public works personnel. Consider color coding interiors of buildings and numbering doors to assist responders.

u. Consider creating a system of "knox boxes" outside school buildings. Knoxboxes are storage devices that provide staff and emergency response personnel with access to keys at any time of the day or night.

2. Planning for Donations and Memorials

a. Establish a school policy for memorializing students and other school personnel. For types of considerations, see "Memorials, Funerals, and Anniversaries" in Section 6.

b. Designate responsibility for coordinating receipt and distribution of donations in the event of a crisis. Ensure proper accountability and receipt of funds/materials, etc. Designate types of donations (e.g., clothes, money, etc.). Consider utilizing United Way or another charitable organization already in place.

c. Identify how media and community members will be informed of where donations should be sent.

d. Establish priorities and policies for distributing monetary donations.

e. Prepare in advance a link for donations on the school's web site.

3. Training

a. Test crisis management plans with faculty and staff, and if appropriate with selected students, at the beginning of each school year and/or during in-service days throughout the year. Law enforcement and

Crisis and Evacuation Kits

The following items should be gathered together and located at strategic locations inside and outside of schools. Common locations include principals' offices, local fire and police departments, police car trunks, and specially designated places in all areas of schools. Information in the crisis kits should be updated periodically as appropriate.

- Name tags.
- Notebooks.
- Pens & markers.
- Hand radios.
- Batteries.
- First aid supplies.
- Tape.
- Blankets.
- Megaphone.
- Tools.
- Separate placards with directional words such as PARENTS, COUNSELORS, MEDIA, CLERGY, VOLUNTEERS, KEEP OUT.
- Caution tape.
- Copies of student records, especially health and identification.
- Attendance rosters.
- Bus rosters and routes.
- Emergency response telephone numbers.
- Student, teacher, and staff home phone numbers and emergency contacts.
- Telephone directory for school system.
- List of teachers with cell phones and their cell phone numbers.
- Current yearbook, class photos, student IDs, or if available, CD-ROM photo databases.
- Schedules of students, teachers, and staff available.
- School sites' layouts, building floor plans, and aerial maps.

A laptop computer, printer, and access to a copier are required for immediate use.

emergency service agencies in the community should be included.

b. Coordinate and regularly hold scenario-based training sessions that bring together law enforcement, other emergency response personnel, school teachers, and other school staff.

c. Train teachers and staff on the types of information that emergency response personnel will need to respond to different types of crises, such as when the event occurred, where it happened, how many are involved, whether lockdown or evacuation has occurred, etc.

d. Consider using local emergency response personnel or district-wide crisis teams to provide training.

e. To the extent possible, provide cross-training to members of the Crisis Management Team and to other school personnel.

f. Review the crisis response plan with teachers, principals, staff, volunteers, campus supervisors, and school resource officers.

g. Review the crisis response plan with students.

h. Provide training to teachers and school staff on their assigned, and if applicable, back-up roles during crisis situations.

i. Supplement verbal training with a written pamphlet to remind students, as well as full-time, part-time, intern, and substitute teachers of their specified roles.

j. On an on-going basis, provide training to staff; volunteers; full-time, part-time, intern, and substitute teachers; and other persons who are regularly on campus regarding how to respond to different types of crisis scenarios.

k. Develop written summaries of crisis response instructions to be disseminated to new substitutes along with their specific classroom materials.

l. Provide information to parents/guardians on their roles during crisis situations. Also inform them where they should go to meet with the designated spokespersons, where to retrieve their children and get information about the status of the crisis, and what they can do to help during and after the crisis.

m. Decide on an appropriate balance of crisis response information and crisis response drills for students that leaves them feeling safe without causing undue fear.

n. Provide training in media relations for appointed media spokespersons during the planning phase. Invite media representatives to those training sessions to strengthen relationships and enhance understanding of their respective needs.

o. Provide information to local media representatives on how to receive and communicate information about crises to the community.

p. Teach students, teachers, and staff to recognize the physiological cues experienced in crisis situations. Rehearse constructive skills and behaviors instead of relying on impulsive actions during crisis situations.

q. Provide emergency first-aid training to teachers, staff, and students.

r. Provide staff, teachers, and students with instructions on personal safety awareness and survival skills, on how to report and respond to persons making threats or displaying weapons, and about locating and not giving up safe positions.

s. Incorporate crisis preparation training and requirements into teacher education programs at colleges and universities.

B. The Role of Law Enforcement and Emergency Response Personnel

1. Conduct meetings with representatives from the school community and from all local law enforcement, fire, and other emergency response agencies to obtain, develop, and coordinate school site safety plans.
2. Maintain information in vehicles of first responders about school sites' layouts, building floor plans, and aerial maps. Update as needed.
3. Create systems by which students, teachers, and/or staff hearing commands (e.g., "Open the door") may be better able to identify that they came from official law enforcement or school personnel, instead of from offenders. Consider the possibility that the offenders could be students, faculty, or staff when designing and communicating details about those systems to school personnel.
4. Work toward integrating disparate law enforcement and emergency response communication technologies to enable more effective communication between agencies during crises.
5. Develop and provide training on the Incident Command System, which coordinates supervision and direction of different school authorities, law enforcement personnel, and emergency responders from a central command post.

Section 5. During a Major Crisis

Sections 5 and 6 provide suggestions for responses during and after school crises in which one or more individuals have been victimized by violence.

A. The Role of School Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

1. Immediate Response

At the onset of a situation, the following things need to happen as close together as possible. Responding personnel will have to use individual judgement as to what they can and should do first, keeping in mind that their primary role is taking care of children at risk.

a. Get students out of harms way. When possible, contact the appropriate school authority or person on the Crisis Management Team to determine whether evacuation or lockdown is the appropriate response. Teachers should make decisions of lockdown or evacuation on their own only in life threatening situations, as specified in the school Crisis Management Plan.

b. Assess whether anyone is injured and the severity of injuries. Take appropriate measures.

c. Call 911 or have someone call 911 in immediate life-threatening situations. Then alert school authorities or the Crisis Management Team.

d. If available, activate silent alarms to notify law enforcement.

e. In the event a teacher cannot call or leave the classroom, send students for help only if absolutely necessary and if it does not put them in more danger than they would be by evacuating or remaining with their class.

f. Have designated personnel (i.e., central administration or the crisis director) decide about the appropriate level of involvement of the Crisis Management Team.

g. Have appointed staff begin the calling/phone tree before phone lines get overloaded. If lines are immediately overloaded, then contact the designated alternative phone service provider.

h. Remain with students until notified by appropriate personnel on what actions to take. Teachers and staff who are not with children should serve in designated roles and/or take assigned action.

2. Implementing the Crisis Management Plan

Depending on the nature of the emergency, either law enforcement or the fire department will be in charge of the incident.

a. Secure all areas for student and staff safety until the police arrive.

b. Be aware that the site may be a potential crime scene. Avoid unnecessarily tampering with or disturbing evidence. To the extent possible, leave all objects exactly as they are in order to protect evidence for law enforcement investi-

gations. Discourage others from disturbing potential evidence.

c. Communicate to emergency responders where the school staff command post is located.

d. Direct families arriving on-site to pre-designated locations where they can receive information.

e. Do not dismiss students to unknown care.

f. In the case of a lockdown, have a sign-out sheet to monitor which students have been picked up by their parents/guardians. In the case of evacuation, have a location where parents/guardians go to sign-out their children.

g. Never speculate. Be sure to understand the circumstances surrounding the situation before saying anything about it, and to the extent practicable, before taking action. Follow all rules about repeating or giving out information.

h. As appropriate, keep students informed about what is happening. Ensure that the same information is communicated to all students. If at all possible, update students in individual classrooms, not in a large group setting.

i. As soon as possible, take a head count to determine which students, staff, and teachers are accounted for and which ones are not.

j. To the extent possible, shield students from disturbing scenes. Do not disturb, however, crime scene evidence.

B. The Role of Students

Students should understand and follow all plans applicable to the given crisis situation. Students should not panic. In addition, they should be taught the following:

1. In the absence of adult direction, decide where it is safest to be and remain there.
2. If a violent situation occurs, notify the first available adult.
3. Share all relevant information with law enforcement, teachers, and school staff.
4. During and after the crisis, to the extent that it is safe, keep with you what is on your person, do not pick anything up, and do not go back for anything until after receiving permission.
5. Assist teachers and staff in quickly assessing who is accounted for and who is not.
6. If able, provide assistance to injured persons.
7. Calm and reassure fellow students.
8. Follow school, law enforcement, or other emergency response personnel directions about where to go or remain.
9. Do not speculate or perpetuate rumors to others.
10. Do not retaliate or take unnecessary chances.

C. The Role of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement participation is necessary in order to develop and implement well-coordinated and effective responses to crisis situations.

1. Respond to all reports of criminal activities in the school. Rapid response teams should be formed to help ensure immediate intervention in all emergency situations.
2. Exercise appropriate rules of engagement when immediate intervention is needed, keeping in mind the safety of victims, bystanders, and first responders.
3. Establish and adhere to direction from the Incident Command System.
4. Establish appropriate security/response perimeters. Provide traffic control assistance to enable emergency services to get through to the crisis location.
5. Develop lines of communication with affected schools' administrations and district emergency operation centers or command posts.
6. Protect relevant evidence from contamination. Follow approved collection procedures to facilitate effective prosecution of perpetrators.
7. Assist parents/guardians in locating their children.
8. Be prepared to assist with many unforeseeable duties.

Section 6. After a Crisis

The actions taken after severe acts of violence can have a major effect on the well-being of students and the community at large. It is difficult to respond in a timely and appropriate manner without having a pre-established, detailed plan.

A. The Role of School Administrators

1. Support Systems

a. Implement plans for providing qualified counselors, especially for providing Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (see the textbox on page 30). Students, faculty, and staff may require both short-term and long-term counseling.

b. When providing information and counseling, take into account multi-lingual needs.

c. Maintain both an information line and special call-in line for victims and their families whenever large groups of students are affected.

d. Keep in close contact with injured victims and/or surviving family members.

e. Determine the need for additional health services and resources (e.g., nursing staff) to attend to increased physical needs of students.

f. Hold meetings to provide staff with information related to the crisis, eliminate rumors, advise them of next steps, and advise them on what to tell their students.

g. Develop written statements for teachers to read in class. Send similar statements to parents.

h. Help students, faculty, and staff deal with their own reactions. Whenever possible, help teachers and staff deal with their reactions first, before they interact with their students.

i. Hold a special meeting with victims and their siblings.

j. Ensure that each school in the district supports siblings of victims by providing them with additional reassurances of safety and academic support as appropriate.

k. Provide places and times for members of peer groups to meet and counsel each other.

l. Designate space for "safe rooms" where at any time, students, teachers, and staff can receive comfort and counseling and talk about events during the crisis.

m. Provide information to parents/guardians who want to know how to help their children cope with feelings about the crisis.

n. Hold special workshops for students who feel angry about the crisis to express their feelings.

o. Keep parents/guardians informed of the support services being made available to their children.

p. Provide a place after the crisis where parents/guardians can meet with counselors and other adults to discuss ways to help their children transition back into school.

q. Provide a list of suggested readings to teachers, parents, and students.

r. Only after persons who have been directly affected by the crisis have received needed attention, evaluate whether community forums should be initiated for people to air their concerns about the tragedy or other issues pertaining to school safety.

s. Fund additional time for teachers to work with students needing additional academic support due to such problems as grief, stress, difficulty concentrating, and anxiety.

t. Hire a volunteer coordinator to ensure the meaningful participation of parents/guardians and community members in a way that does not use additional administrative time.

u. Provide for the orientation of families who enroll their children in schools where violent events have occurred. Include younger students who graduate into these schools and students who transfer from other schools.

2. Managing the School Environment After Violence

a. Maintain close cooperation with investigating authorities to facilitate completing investigations and minimizing complications.

b. Deal with problems of deceased students' desks and lockers. Have a counselor or other qualified adult provide therapy while sitting at an empty assigned desk, bus seat, or locker. In the case of an empty desk, one strategy is to move the desk, over time, to the back of the row and all other desks forward; then eventually, remove the desk.

c. When appropriate, remove deceased students' names from forms, posters, rosters, absence reporting logs, and anywhere else they occur in reporting systems.

d. In collaboration with families of victims and the school community, evaluate how affected areas in the school site where school violence took place should be handled when students return to school.

3. Memorials, Funerals, and Incident Anniversaries

a. Allow excused absences and time off for all students, teachers, and staff who wish to attend funerals and memorials.

b. Allow for and cooperate with families who are planning memorials and activities to honor victims.

c. Arrange to have a quiet area for staff and students who do not wish to attend memorials and activities.

d. If possible, avoid conducting funerals at the school.

e. Assess the appropriateness of creating memorials to victims on school premises, particularly in the case of religious memorials. If establishing memorials on site would not be appropriate, identify alternative sites, and consider living memorials such as trees as an option.

f. Include students, families of victims, and community members in planning for memorials.

g. Establish a policy for how school administration should handle student or community members' independently establishing memorials.

h. Assess whether families want recognition of victims at graduation ceremonies, at assemblies, in yearbooks, and on anniversaries of the crisis. Particularly at graduations, chairs for those victims could be left empty and their names read.

i. Invite family members of victims to all ceremonies and memorials.

j. Plan ahead for the attention the school will receive on the one-year anniversary of the incident.

k. Plan ahead for the emotional needs of the school community on anniversaries.

l. Consider the special needs of families of offenders.

m. Ensure someone is at the home of the deceased victims and perpetrators during funerals and/or memorial services to prevent against theft, vandalism, etc.

4. Closure of Mourning Period and Moving Forward

a. Consult with counselors, teachers, students, and staff on when would be the most appropriate time to signal closure of the mourning period.

b. Conduct a public ceremony to symbolize closure of the mourning period, and control media access to it.

c. Hold a parents' night to bring closure to the crisis.

d. Get school in session and moving forward as soon as possible.

5. Lessons Learned

a. Conduct meetings with school site and district personnel to review lessons learned from the experience.

b. Reevaluate the adequacy of crisis and safety planning based on lessons learned, and make modifications as necessary.

c. Write thank-you notes to out-of-building district and community resource people who provided (or are still providing) support during the crisis.

B. The Role of Teachers and Staff

1. Cooperate with law enforcement to maximize investigative effectiveness.
2. Help victims and other students reenter the school environment. Classmates of victims may need help in knowing how to act.
3. Provide accurate information to students and dispel rumors.
4. Provide activities to reduce stress and trauma, such as artwork, music, and writing.
5. Alter curricula and postpone testing as needed.
6. Ensure librarians have books available that deal with managing grief and other reactions to crisis situations.
7. Train teachers to be aware of warning signs of grief and depression.
8. Train teachers to implement techniques to deal with the range of students' emotions related to crisis situations.
9. Have class discussions about the incident and how to cope with the aftermath.
10. Be careful of the use of TV broadcasts in the classroom. Live newscasts can be traumatizing.
11. Lower classroom and/or school flags to half-staff.
12. Discuss funeral procedures when appropriate.

13. Volunteer to help victims and their families.
14. Organize and participate in memorials and other activities.
15. Seek counseling for help in dealing with personal feelings about the incident.

C. The Role of School Counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers

1. Stay in close contact with the counseling director of the Crisis Management Team.
2. Be available by canceling other activities.
3. Obtain the schedule of any seriously injured or deceased students and visit their classes. Also visit classes attended by their close friends.
4. Organize and provide individual and group counseling as needed to students, teachers, and staff.
5. Contact parents/guardians of affected students with suggestions for counseling support and referrals.
6. Locate counseling assistance throughout the community, including counselors from other nearby schools.
7. Establish a self-referral procedure. Make referral forms available.
8. Provide and advise counseling for the crisis team and emergency response personnel.
9. Keep records of affected students and provide follow-up services.
10. Accept other responsibilities as designated by the Crisis Management Team director.

D. The Role of Parents

1. Learn to recognize and help children with their reactions. Common reactions include unrealistic fears of the future, insomnia, physical illness, and becoming easily distracted.
2. Encourage children to receive counseling or to speak to a trusted adult about their feelings surrounding the incident.
3. Consider attending school as needed with children who are very fearful of returning to their classes.
4. Obtain counseling as needed in order to be able to remain physically and emotionally healthy and be available for one's children.

E. The Role of the Community

1. Volunteer time and resources to victims.
2. Provide services to meet the needs of victims.
3. Provide a central location where other members of the community can go to receive information about the types of assistance needed and/or available.

F. The Role of Law Enforcement

1. After a crisis, conduct a thorough investigation including debriefing of all persons present at the time of the incident.
2. Encourage the development and use of regional Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Teams for involved emergency personnel. (See the textbox on page 30 for more information).
3. Coordinate with affected schools and other agencies to assist victims' families in locating survivors.
4. Encourage schools to support their employees and students in the prosecution of people who commit acts of violent crime.
5. Encourage law enforcement and schools to coordinate their news releases.
6. Provide schools with a central point of contact in the police department who will answer questions and address concerns.
7. Encourage students and school employees to participate in aftermath debriefings.
8. Facilitate meetings in which teachers, staff, students, and parents/guardians can express their thoughts on how police handled the incident.
9. Undertake and coordinate critique of the department's response after a serious incident of school violence. Identify areas in need of improvement.

Section 7. Legal Considerations

The liability, rights and responsibilities of school personnel in maintaining a safe school environment are affected by a variety of local, state, and federal statutes, regulations, constitutional requirements, and judicial decisions. School policies also may play a key role in establishing liability and affecting the responsibilities of school personnel. Schools seeking to avoid liability for acts related to school violence, including the steps taken to prevent it, should become familiar with the legal requirements. The following pages offer a foundation to begin a legal audit of schools' current policies and practices for reducing school violence.

The following list of legal considerations is not comprehensive. Before acting on any of these issues, consult with legal counsel.

A. Liability of Schools When Students Are Harmed

1. Failure to Adhere to Law or Policy

In some instances, liability may be premised on failure to adhere to current local, state, and federal school safety laws and regulations or school district safety policy. School officials should:

a. Ensure compliance with all current applicable local, state, and/or federal statutes addressing safety and harassment issues.

b. Ensure school districts' safety and harassment policies are fully implemented.

c. Develop and ensure compliance with their own respective school's safety and harassment policy.

d. Evaluate any existing school campus access policy to determine its adequacy and ensure it is being followed.

e. Provide adequate training on the issues listed above to school personnel.

2. Failure to Use Reasonable Care in Selecting Personnel

In some instances, liability may be premised on failing to use reasonable care in screening, hiring, training, supervising, and retaining personnel who are regularly on-site and who commit acts of violence. School officials should:

a. Implement appropriate screening and hiring standards to minimize likelihood of hiring personnel with propensities toward violence, consistent with applicable law.

b. Ensure proper training of teachers and school staff in the recognition of warning signs for violent behavior, on steps to take to minimize violence, and on appropriate responses if violence occurs.

3. Negligent Responses to Threats and Acts of Violence

In some instances, liability may be premised on negligent responses to threats and acts of violence falling within the school's jurisdiction and sphere of duty. School officials should:

a. Provide reasonable supervision for students, especially in specific areas where prior threats or instances of violence have occurred.

b. Take swift and consistent action when addressing personnel or stu-

dents who threaten or engage in violent actions.

c. Exercise due caution when placing potentially or known violent individuals in school populations, consistent with applicable law.

d. Determine when they have a duty to warn students, faculty, or other personnel about a potential danger, including providing any (and only) legally authorized and appropriate information about the violent propensities of individuals to the appropriate personnel.

e. Determine the applicable mandatory reporting requirements concerning a threat or legal action.

B. Liability of Schools for Wrongful Accusations and Discharge

School personnel must respond to threats of violence in a way that protects suspected individuals from defamation of character and other tortious liability if suspicions about them are mistaken. Liability can be minimized by conducting prompt investigations of all allegations and by notifying only those individuals with a need to know about them. Such actions, however, must be balanced by the need to protect students and staff whenever there are threats of serious violence. School officials should:

a. Conduct thorough investigations of complaints prior to removing suspected individuals from the school, if there is sufficient time. Removal of employees or students must be consistent with applicable laws. It may be appropriate to remove individuals from school without expulsion or termination pending their investigations. If students or employees are wrongfully terminated or expelled, school officials may be subjected to wrongful termination or expulsion suits.

b. Respect the privacy rights and confidentiality rights of all individuals during investigations.

C. Liability of Schools For Violating Students' Rights

1. Reasonable Searches and Seizures

Develop and apply policies for conducting searches and seizures of student property consistent with the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, as well as all applicable state and local statutes.

a. Seek the advice of an attorney before implementing any policy on search and/or seizure of students' property.

b. While a warrant may not be required, school officials must justify any search and/or seizure based on the following:

1) Reasonable suspicion that the law or a school rule has been violated.

2) Information, facts, or circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that evidence of a crime or rule violation would be found in the search.

3) The relationship between the extensiveness of the search and the evidence being sought.

4) The relationship between the severity of the threat and the degree of intrusiveness in conducting the search.

5) The presence of any special legal considerations, such as whether the student did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy; the object(s) seized fell within the plain view of an official who had a right to be at that location; the person who seized the object was not affiliated with, or directed to do so by, the government; or the student voluntarily consented to the search.

c. Take into consideration the legal liability related to any type of nonconsensual search of students or students' property, including but not limited to:

- Locker searches.
- Vehicle searches.
- Use of metal detectors.
- Use of drug- or weapon-sniffing dogs.
- Drug testing.
- Body searches.
- Use of cameras.
- Police-assisted searches.
- Searches of abandoned articles.
- Book bag, purse, and backpack searches.
- Searches of outer clothing.
- Strip searches.

2. Student Suspension and Expulsion for Violent Actions and Threats

Students are entitled to due process before being suspended or expelled. Usually, more due process rights are required for expulsion than suspension.

a. Ensure the process established by schools and the standards utilized for suspending or expelling students are consistent with applicable local, state, and federal laws, and applied consistently.

b. Ensure the nature and adequacy of public education alternatives for those either suspended or expelled from their usual public school programs are consistent with applicable laws.

c. Before suspending or expelling a student, school officials should provide the student due process rights as required by state and federal law. These rights may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Provision of a written and specific statement of the charges that justify suspension or expulsion.

2) Opportunity for a full hearing after adequate notification.

3) Use of impartial adjudicators.

4) Opportunity for students and parents/guardians to examine evidence against the student.

5) Opportunity for students and parents/guardians to present evidence favorable to the student.

6) Opportunity to be represented by counsel.

7) Opportunity to confront and examine adverse witnesses.

d. Ensure expulsion hearings are fully and formally recorded.

e. Ensure adjudicators' decisions in hearings are based on a full and fair review of the evidence.

3. Use of Dress Codes and Uniforms

As required by law, accommodate students whose religious beliefs would be compromised by their compliance with school dress code provisions.

4. Rights to Privacy in Matters of Record Keeping and Information Sharing between Agencies

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protects the confidentiality of all student records information. Ensure compliance also with applicable laws pertaining to divulging information about peer court or formal juvenile court proceedings with the school and community or service providers. Issues may include the following:

- Whether or not peer or juvenile court hearings should be open to the public.
- Release or publication of juveniles' names.
- Release or publication of juveniles' pictures.
- Confidentiality of peer or juvenile court records.
- Admissibility of student records.
- Prohibition of sealing or expunging records.
- Parental access to children's records.
- Parental consent for release of information in children's records.

D. Liability of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians may also be held criminally or civilly liable for foreseeable youth violence they should have acted to prevent.

1. In some instances, parents/guardians may be held criminally or civilly liable for negligent storage of a firearm or for negligently providing their children with a firearm. Currently, sixteen states have Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws requiring gun owners keep their guns locked out of reach of children.

2. In some instances, parents/guardians may be held criminally or civilly liable for failure to do the following:

- Adequately supervise their children.
- Take corrective action with problematic behavior displayed by their children.
- Notify others about a foreseeable threat to the safety of others that their own children pose.

The list of legal considerations addressed in this section is not comprehensive. Before acting on any of these issues, consult with legal counsel.

Section 8. Recommendations for the Media

All forms of communication media (e.g., print, television, radio, computer, and film) can play an important role in helping to prevent violence in the schools. They can also help limit the adverse impact that results when violence does occur.

Unfortunately, the media can also contribute to the problem. Exposure to excessive violence:

- **Increases the chances that at least some of those exposed to the media will learn and/or contemplate using violent responses**. "Copycat" suicides, shootings, and bomb threats sometime follow extensive media coverage or depictions of those events.
- **Desensitizes viewers to the horrors of violence and may increase their proficiency committing it**. Many of the same types of shooting simulation exercises used by law enforcement and the military to train people for situations where they may have to kill are being sold to children as video games. Some of the electronic media games available to children award extra points to players for engaging in simulated antisocial acts.
- **Exaggerates the magnitude of the real threat**. This could result in people fearing for their own or their children's safety in situations where little danger is actually present.

Rights and Obligations of the Media

Journalists have the right and obligation to gather and report school-violence information that is of interest or importance to the public. Creators and producers of all forms of media have the right to make and sell their products as long as they do not break the law. The exercise of those rights, however, needs to be balanced against the rights of parents/guardians and society to protect children from unnecessary harm. The recommendations in this section are intended to help better achieve that balance. Additional sets of recommendations are provided in textboxes to address how the media should handle violence-related crises and bomb threats (see the textboxes on pages 48 and 49 respectively). The recommendations in those textboxes were developed by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and have been disseminated by the Radio-Television News Directors Association.

Guidelines for Media in Covering On-Going Crisis Situations

In covering an ongoing crisis situation, journalists are advised to:

- Always assume that the hostage taker, gunman or terrorist has access to the reporting.
- Avoid describing with words or showing with still photography and video any information that could divulge the tactics or positions of SWAT team members.
- Fight the urge to become a player in any standoff, hostage situation or terrorist incident. Journalists should become personally involved only as a last resort and with the explicit approval of top news management and the consultation of trained hostage negotiators on the scene.
- Be forthright with viewers, listeners or readers about why certain information is being withheld if security reasons are involved.
- Seriously weigh the benefits to the public of what information might be given out versus what potential harm that information might cause. This is especially important in live reporting of an on-going situation.
- Strongly resist the temptation to telephone a gunman or hostage taker. Journalists generally are not trained in negotiation techniques, and one wrong question or inappropriate word could jeopardize someone's life. Furthermore, just calling in could tie up phone lines or otherwise complicate communication efforts of the negotiators.
- Notify authorities immediately if a hostage taker or terrorist calls the newsroom. Also, have a plan ready for how to respond.
- Challenge any gut reaction to "go live" from the scene of a hostage-taking crisis, unless there are strong journalistic reasons for a live, on-the-scene report. Things can go wrong very quickly in a live report, endangering lives or damaging negotiations. Furthermore, ask if the value of a live, on-the-scene report is really justifiable compared to the harm that could occur.
- Give no information, factual or speculative, about a hostage taker's mental condition, state of mind or reasons for actions while a standoff is in progress. The value of such information to the audience is limited, and the possibility of such characterizations exacerbating an already dangerous situation are quite real.
- Give no analyses or comments on a hostage taker's or terrorist's demands. As bizarre or ridiculous (or even legitimate) as such demands may be, it is important that negotiators take all demands seriously.
- Keep news helicopters out of the area where the standoff is happening, as their noise can create communication problems for negotiators and their presence could scare a gunman to deadly action.
- Do not report information obtained from police scanners. If law enforcement personnel and negotiators are compromised in their communications, their attempts to resolve a crisis are greatly complicated.
- Be very cautious in any reporting on the medical condition of hostages until after a crisis is concluded. Also, be cautious when interviewing hostages or released hostages while a crisis continues.

Continued on next page

Guidelines for Media in Covering On-Going Crisis Situations (Concluded)

- Exercise care when interviewing family members or friends of those involved in standoff situations. Make sure the interview legitimately advances the story for the public and is not simply conducted for the shock value of the emotions conveyed or as a conduit for the interviewee to transmit messages to specific individuals.
- Go beyond the basic story of the hostage taking or standoff to report on the larger issues behind the story, be it the how and why of what happened, reports on the preparation and execution of the SWAT team, or the issues related to the incident.

In covering a pending raid or law enforcement action, journalists are advised to:

- Be extremely cautious to not compromise the secrecy of officials' planning and execution. If staking out a location where a raid will occur or if accompanying officers, reporters and photographers should demonstrate great caution in how they act, where they go, and what clues they might inadvertently give that might compromise the execution of the raid. They should check and double-check planning efforts.

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Guidelines for Journalists and Reporters Covering Bomb Threat Stories

- Ask yourself these questions: What is my journalistic duty in reporting this story? What do our viewers need to know? What is the threat to life or property? What are the consequences of the event itself? How significant is the evacuation and the interruption to normal life in your community? What is the impact this event has on the ability of law enforcement or emergency crews to respond to other calls? What else is this story about? What is the story behind the story? (In some cases, racial slurs and threats have been sprayed on school walls.)
- What are the possible consequences of my actions and decisions? Reporting a false threat could lead to copycat threats, or reporting arrests might discourage such threats by showing the consequences for threatening others.
- Other consequences might include raising the public's level of insecurity even when it is not warranted. Repeated broadcasting of bomb hoaxes can have the effect of "crying wolf," and the public becomes less responsive when actual danger arises. But the reporting on the volume and range of threats could inform viewers and listeners about the pressures police and schools officials are under. It could be important for the public to understand why officials react as they do.

Continued on next page

Guidelines for Journalists and Reporters Covering Bomb Threat Stories (Concluded)

- How could you justify your decisions about where and how you play stories about bomb threats in your newscasts? How do you explain your decisions to your staff and to your viewers? How much discussion have you had in your newsroom about your coverage? What experts or persons outside your newsroom could you contact to get their perspectives about how you should treat this story?
- Be careful about the tone of your coverage. Avoid words like "chaos," "terror," and "mayhem." They are subjective words. Play it straight. Tone down your teases and leads and graphics. The tone of what you report should not contradict the careful reporting of facts you include in your stories. Think carefully before "going live" in covering these stories. You have less editorial control in live situations. The emphasis on live coverage may warp the attention these stories deserve. A lead story carries different weight than a story that is deeper in the newscast. How can you justify the positioning of your coverage?
- Cover the process more than the events. What thought are you giving to the bigger issues involved in this story? How easy is it for schools, the phone company, or cops to track down a threatening caller? How seriously are violators treated? Have you ever followed one of these cases through the legal system to find out what happens? How many bomb threats did police handle last year? How many resulted in prosecution? How many of those prosecuted went to jail or were actually punished? What was the extent of the punishment? Do your schools have caller ID systems in place? Do they or should they record incoming phone calls?
- Minimize harm. We sometimes cause harm in the process of performing our journalistic duty, but it should be only the harm we can justify. Special care should be taken when covering juveniles. You should carefully consider whether placing a prank phone call warrants naming a juvenile. In one instance in upstate New York this week, a TV station could not talk with the juvenile suspected of placing the prank phone call, so the station interviewed the suspect's teen-age brother. What harm do we cause by sending a news photographer to a school that has been threatened by a caller?

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1. Recommendations for Executives in Television, Radio, Internet, Recording, Electronic Game, and Film Industries.

a. Establish a code of ethics and social responsibility for their organization that includes guidelines on the type of content it will refrain from producing/airing.

b. Encourage their professional and trade associations to hold seminars pertaining to their industry's ethical and social responsibilities.

c. Refrain from producing and airing advertisements, lyrics, films, games, or programs likely to contribute to the commission of youth violence or other antisocial acts.

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d. Address the actual consequences of violence when it is depicted, instead of trivializing or glorifying it.

e. During time slots when children are likely to be viewing, avoid showing programs that may contribute to their committing violence or other antisocial acts.

f. Develop and support television programs, recordings, movies, and video games that promote positive social interactions and values for children of all ages.

g. Promote, use, display, and enforce rating systems that help parents/guardians select media appropriate for their children.

h. Support efforts to make sure that media rating systems address messages conveyed, as well as the choice of words and images presented.

i. Support efforts to make V-Chip technology a successful way for parents/guardians to help prevent their children from being exposed to inappropriate violence.

j. Initiate anti-violence programs. (MTV and the American Psychological Association joined forces to create "Fight for Your Rights: Take a Stand against Violence.")

2. Planning for Media Coverage of School Violence

Prior to incidents of school violence occurring, executives in the print, electronic, and broadcast news and information media should:

a. Establish at each newsroom and station codes of conduct for reporting and broadcasting incidents like school violence.

b. Encourage their professional and trade associations to hold sessions on the media's ethical responsibilities in this area.

c. Provide in-depth coverage regarding steps school communities can take to reduce hazards of school violence. Make copies of the articles and programs available free of charge to schools and non-profit organizations.

d. Provide local coverage, public service announcements, and features that provide points of contact for youth counselors, substance abuse treatment, suicide prevention, and other social or mental health programs, and encourage friends and family to refer youth who appear troubled to those programs.

e. Encourage investigative reporting that identifies people or situations contributing to the risk of school violence. Examples of possible stories include:

   1) School administrators and local government officials who fail to take adequate protection measures.

   2) Legislators who have taken positions related to school violence against the public interest.

   3) Individuals or businesses in their community who knowingly sell weapons illegally either to children or to adults purchasing weapons for children.

f. Provide law enforcement or school officials with timely information acquired from media contacts that might prevent an incident of school violence from occurring.

g. Report on, and influence, public support for taking needed corrective actions.

h. Establish "win-win" partnerships with police for covering crises like school violence. In Boston, television stations have voluntarily agreed to share footage supplied by media pool on-ground and helicopter cam-

eras in certain hostage situations. This way competing camera crews do not add to the confusion. The stations also agreed not to air live coverage while incidents were occurring that could aid offenders, endanger deployed police personnel, or harm people trapped on the premises. In return, police provide better locations for media pool cameras and more frequent updates.

3. During and After School Violence Crises

During and after incidents of school violence, individuals working in the print, electronic, and broadcast news and information media should:

a. Present coverage of school violence that is factual and balanced, including information about its prevalence compared to other crimes and whether it is on the rise or decline.

b. Address the larger context of school violence, such as how students, schools, and communities have been affected.

c. Inform the public what steps are being taken to help people handle the crisis.

d. Consider the possible motivations of people who engage in violence in the schools and refrain from rewarding those actions. For example, frequent displays of offender names and pictures may convey to potential "copycat" offenders that this is one way to quickly and easily achieve fame. Depicting offenders as "victims" who were out to "right a wrong" might falsely convey that school shootings are an effective way for students to redress grievances.

e. Communicate helpful information to victims and concerned citizens. Examples include:

   1) Helping law enforcement acquire information from the public needed to identify or locate offenders.

   2) Informing parents/guardians where victim information can be obtained.

   3) Letting the public know how they can help (e.g., donate blood, money, services, etc.).

   4) Informing victims about the importance and locations of grief counseling and other post-event services.

   5) Informing students, parents/guardians, teachers and staff about any alterations to school schedules.

f. Utilize designated public information officers as the sole source of official information about crisis incidents, instead of seeking it from other personnel at crisis locations.

g. Be careful not to distract law enforcement or other emergency response personnel or impede them or their equipment. This includes use of the air space above the location.

h. Respect the privacy rights of victims and the people connected to them.

i. Offer to supply helicopters and other equipment or services that might aid police or other emergency providers.

j. Promptly provide law enforcement with information acquired from media contacts that might lead to the arrest of an offender before either that person or someone else is also harmed.

Section 9. Legislative Issues

Focus group participants asked that this document also include their suggested legislative actions pertaining to violence prevention and reduction. Their ideas, which are listed below, do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the project sponsors. Their suggestions have broad policy implications that, if considered, would have to be resolved at the appropriate federal, state, and local levels.

The following potential legislative actions were raised for consideration:

1. Mandate that all schools develop and implement school safety plans.
2. Modify laws (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to ensure that disruptive or violent students can be removed from traditional school settings and placed in alternative programs.
3. Consider modifying confidentiality statutes to allow sharing of information about problematic juveniles between appropriate law enforcement, social service, juvenile justice, and school authorities.
4. Consider legislation that holds firearm owners criminally responsible when minors gain access to improperly stored firearms.
5. Consider legislation that requires all firearms sold be equipped with trigger locks or another child-safety device.
6. Consider legislation that would permit public school districts to require students to wear uniforms.
7. Consider legislation requiring all new public school construction and major renovations to existing public school facilities conform to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design guidelines.
8. Require all public school systems to provide training in the areas of behavior management, crisis management, and violence prevention.
9. Provide adequate funding for any new legislatively mandated school safety requirements.
10. Consider providing funding for the following:
    - Optimal class and school sizes in pre-K through 12th grade.
    - Compensation for law enforcement and security personnel at after-school events.
    - Programs for violence prevention and intervention.
    - Expanded use of probation, law enforcement, and social services on campus.
    - Expanded use of safety and security teams that may include, but are not limited to, school board members, security professionals, administrators, law enforcement, parents, probation officers, faculty, staff, and students.
    - All the individual counseling attention students need.
    - After-school programs with the potential to benefit students.
    - Alternative education programs for students not successful in traditional school settings.
    - Expanded use of School Resource Officers (SROs) on school campuses.

Section 10. Web Links with Additional Information

The following list of web sites pertaining to school safety is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it provides good places to start exploring school safety and violence reduction resources on the web.

A. General Resources

Bureau of Justice Assistance
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Center for Mental Health Services: School Violence Prevention
http://www.mentalhealth.org/specials/schoolviolence/index.htm

Center for the Prevention of School Violence
http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cep/PreViolence/index.html

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence: Violence in American Schools
http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/research/violenceschools.html

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Suggested Violence Policies
http://www.cabe.org/Docs/Publications/Online/policies.htm

Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Program
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/index.html

Federal Emergency Management Agency
http://www.fema.gov/

Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC): School Safety
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/administration/safety/

International Association of Chiefs of Police
http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/Pubs/PSLC.index.htm
http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/research/youCanUse.htm
http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/Pubs/safeschol.htm
http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/research/ythvio.htm

The Justice Information Center
http://www.ncjrs.org/

Keep Schools Safe
http://www.keepschoolssafe.org/

National Crime Prevention Council's Online Resource Center
http://www.ncpc.org/

National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families, Resources on School Violence
http://www.naspweb.org/center/safe_schools/safeschools_violencepre.html

National School Safety Center
http://www.nssc1.org/

National Youth Gang Center
http://www.iir.com/nygc/

Occupational Safety and Health Administration / U.S. Department of Labor
http://www.osha.gov/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/

Partnerships Against Violence Online
http://www.pavnet.org/

Peace it Together: Strategies for Violence Prevention
http://www.mcet.edu/peace/

Resources for Youth
http://www.preventviolence.org

U.S. Department of Justice for Kids and Youth
http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/

B. Incident Command Systems

British Columbia Emergency Response Management System
http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/iepc/bcerms.html

Federal Emergency Management Agency: Incident Command System Independent Study
http://www.fema.gov/emi/is81st.htm

New York State Incident Command System
http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us/ICS/explain.htm

C. Information about Funding for School Safety Programs

Pavnet: Partnerships Against Violence
http://www.pavnet.org/

Safe Schools Coalition: The Grants Site
http://www.ed.mtu.edu/safe/grants.html

US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: School Violence Resources

http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/resources/school.html

U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Program
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/index.html

D. On-line Federal Documents

Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U. S. Schools
http://www.doe.gov/schoolsecurity/pdf.htm

Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide. April 1997
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/index.html

Early Warning, Timely Response – A Guide to Safe Schools
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/HateCrime/start.html

Recommendations of the Crime, Violence, and Discipline Task Force, NCES 97-581
http://www.ed.gov/NCES

Safe, Drug-Free, and Effective Schools for All Students: What Works
http://www.air-dc.org/cecp/resources/safe&drug_free/main.htm

E. Sample School Safety and Crisis Management Plans

Albany, New York
http://mum.neric.org/capboces/safeplan/safeplan.htm

Blueprints: Ten Model Violence Prevention Programs
http://www.Colorado.EDU/cspv/blueprints/bl_navigate.htm

Jonesboro, Arkansas School District
http://nettleton.crsc.k12.ar.us/crisis.htm

F. Sample State Programs

California Department of Education: Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office
http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/safetyhome.html

Kentucky Center for School Safety
http://www.kysafeschools.org/

North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence
http://www.ncsu.edu/cpsv/

Vermont NEA – Community-Wide Approaches to School Violence
http://www.vtnea.org/violence.htm

Washington State
http://www.keepschoolssafe.org/wssd.htm

G. Threat Assessment

U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

In collaboration with other agencies, NTAC staff is currently conducting an operational study of school shootings and will use information from that study to develop threat assessment guidelines for officials with responsibilities to prevent school attacks. As soon as possible, the guidelines will be provided on the Secret Service web site located at http://www.treas.gov/USSS

A NTAC document on threat assessment can be found at:

http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/170612.pdf

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Section 12. Other Private Sector Liaison Committee Publications of Public Safety Interest

The Private Sector Liaison Committee (PSLC) regularly sponsors publications of interest to both law enforcement and the private sector. Those publications can be obtained by sending a written request to IACP or downloading them from the World Wide Web at http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc.index.html.

Current PSLC publications include:

- Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence.
- Combating Workplace Violence - Guidelines for Employers and Law Enforcement.
- Product Tampering - A Recommended Policy of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.
- Drugs in the Workplace - Model Substance Abuse Policy.
- Combating Workplace Drug Crimes - Guidelines for Businesses, Law Enforcement, & Prosecutors.
- False Alarm Perspectives: A Solution - Oriented Resource.
- Private Security Officer Selection, Training, and Licensing Guidelines.
- Non-Sworn Alarm Responder Guidelines.
- Response to Mobile Security Alarm Devices.
- Model States Report: Reducing False Alarm Police Dispatches.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police is the world's senior law enforcement executive association. Founded in 1893, IACP comprises over 16,500 members representing 96 different nations. As an organization it is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, with a permanent staff of approximately 90 professionals. Over 150 working professionals serve on the training faculty. IACP is guided by an advisory board of 52 police executives representing international, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. This group provides policy direction to the professional staff and the association's diverse working groups, divisions, committees, and sections comprised of the heads of law enforcement agencies from throughout the world. The groups address contemporary issues facing law enforcement.

IACP represents a commonwealth of police administrators from the world law enforcement community. It is the singular point of focus where the smallest to the largest of police forces can meet for assistance and direction in a wide range of problem-solving agendas while still maintaining individual agency independence.

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